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TWO

DISCOURSES :

THE FIRST,

Of Man's Enmity to God,

FROM

ROM. viii. 7. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

THE SECOND,

Of the Salvation of Sinners,

FROM

1 TIM. i. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

By the late learned Divine,
STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D.

Published from his original Manuscripts by Mr.
Edward Veel.

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AN

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

READER.

The following advertisement contains the only information to be obtained relative to the two preceding discourses, and is here subjoined as it was originally published with them, by Mr. Veal, one of the editors of the folio edition of these Works.

Good Reader,

• UPON the publication of the second volume of Mr. CHARNOCK's works, it was much lamented by those that knew him and had a just value for him, that some sermons he was known to have preached (and which were as worthy of the public view as the rest, and no less useful to the grand design of man's salvation) could not be found among his papers; especially three sermons, which many heard him preach on three several Lord's-days, upon, 1 Tim. 11. 15, *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* But now, beyond expectation, instead of them, the good providence of God hath brought to light the two following treatises, by the unwearied diligence of Mr. Ashton, one of the laborious transcribers of the first volume of this author's works; and who, to give him his due, hath raked them out of the ashes, and rescued them from that oblivion to which they seemed condemned; having with great pains and patience transcribed, as well as with great judgment

joined together the several materials he found belonging respectively to each subject, in the many loose papers of Mr. Charnock he had by him. The papers I have seen, and with Mr. Ashton's help, have (so far as was needful) compared the transcription with them.

One of these treatises contains the continuation of the author's meditations on 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. - And herein he handles a second doctrine, grounded on the last clause of the verse. The text was fruitful, and bore twins; whereof the younger only survives; the other, I fear, is dead without recovery.

But I verily persuade myself, that many an honest soul will have occasion to bless the Lord for the birth,—shall I say?—or the resurrection of this still-born offspring of so worthy a Father, being thereby stirred up not only to admire that rich grace of God which so eminently appears in many times calling the chiefest of sinners, but encouraged in the faith of it, and supported under the burden of the greatest guilt which we find so often oppressing, terrifying, and even sinking awakened sinners into despair, when they look upon their sins as not only above the sins of others, but even above the mercy of God itself, and therefore unpardonable. If secure sinners shall dare to abuse the great truths here declared and set forth, to the strengthening their hands in their evil works, and emboldening themselves to a life of sin, because God's grace abounds; at their peril be it, and let them answer for it. But in the mean time it is pity that such rich and precious cordials should be withheld from those that need them, lest others to whom they do not belong should presumptuously catch at them, and undo themselves by misapplying them. And who knows not, that what is a cordial to some, may prove poison to others?

As for the other discourse, Of Man's Enmity against God, we cannot find when or where it was preached. I have been credibly informed, that the author had a design (had it pleased God to have prolonged his days) to have preached largely about original Sin; and then it is not unlikely that he might intend this present treatise as one branch of it. And in it, if the reader can but dispense with one degree less of that accuracy

and neatness of style which usually appears in his other writings, he will find as excellent matter, and great things, as in most of them, and indeed the true spirit of the author. He had made great use of the hammer in beating out the truth, but wanted time to apply the file for the more thorough smoothing and polishing of his work, which truly wants nothing but the finishing-stroke. The thread of this discourse is as finely spun as of any, though the piece be not altogether so glossy. But whatever is wanting in ornament, is abundantly made up in usefulness. And if one of these treatises may be a glass in which humbled sinners may see the beauty and glory of sovereign grace, the other too may be a glass in which the best of saints may see the face of their own souls, and a lively representation of that inherent wickedness, which all that diligently observe and know their own hearts, cannot but acknowledge to be natural to them, as having been born with them into the world. I cannot but say that this discourse is an excellent portraiture of the old man; a graphical description of the devil's image impressed upon, and deforming the most beautiful part of this lower creation. It shows how much man is debased and degraded by sin, and become a slave to his lusts, who was made at first to be the lord of his fellow creatures; and so how rueful a legacy our first father has left us, and to what misery he hath intailed us, by communicating so cursed a nature to us. That the blessing of God may be upon these labours of his (long since) deceased, but faithful servant; and that they may, by the power of his grace, be made effectual for obtaining the ends designed by the author, is the desire and prayer of him who is, Good Reader,

Thy Soul's Well-wisher, and

Servant for Jesus sake,

EDW. VEEL.

September 20, 1699.



MAN'S ENMITY TO GOD.*

Rom. 8. 7.

BECAUSE THE CARNAL MIND IS ENMITY AGAINST GOD:
FOR IT IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW OF GOD, NEI-
THER INDEED CAN BE.

PART I.

A STATE OF NATURE, A STATE OF ENMITY
AGAINST GOD.

The text explained—Division of it—What is meant by a state of nature—Not the human nature—Every profane man is a natural man—Every unrenewed man—What his enmity is—It is a state of enmity—At all times—In every sinful act—Against all the attributes of God—It is habitual enmity—Implies aversion—Natural antipathy—Acquired hatred—It is direct enmity—Implicit and interpretative—God not hated as God—Or as the Creator—He is hated as a sovereign.

IN the fourth verse the apostle renews the description of those persons to whom he had proclaimed a jubilee in the first verse; *There is now no condemnation, &c.* Sanctified persons only have an interest in Christ; and those that have an interest in Christ, are not subject to a sentence of death. They are described from their course and conversation; *They*

* This and the following discourse, are not in any copy of the folio edition of Charnock.

MAN'S ENMITY TO GOD.

walk not after the flesh: not after the dictates, wills, desires, importunities of the flesh, but according to the motions, dictates, direction of the Holy Ghost in the gospel.

The note by which we may know, whether we walk after the Spirit, is laid down. *They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit,* ver. 5. *Φρονεῖν* signifies,

1. *Affectum*, affection, *Rom.* 12. 16. *Το αὐτο φρονεῖτε*

2. *Sensum*, sense or relish. The understanding is the palate of the soul, the taster to the will; it considers what things be good, and under that notion offers them to the will. Spiritual things are as dry chips to a carnal heart even as carnal things are contemptible to a spiritual mind.

3. *Cogitationem*, thought. So for the most part it is taken, and notes the *τὸ νηρονικόν*, and is meant of the higher acts of the soul.

Frequent thoughts discover rooted affections. Operations of the mind are the indexes, *Κριτήρια*, of a regenerate or unregenerate estate. If about carnal, they evidence the bent of the heart to be turned that way, and that worldly objects are dearest to them. If about spiritual, they manifest spiritual objects to be the most grateful to the soul. Carnal thoughts are signs of a languishing and feeble frame, but spiritual discover, a well-tempered and complexioned soul.

As this is laid down by the apostle, it hath, as some pictures, a double aspect. It is a character, and a duty. For the apostle enforces it by the consideration of the danger of the one, and the happiness of the other: *To be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace,* ver. 6.

Death and life,

1. *Effective*, by way of efficiency. As they deaden and enliven the soul. Carnal principles are spiritual diseases. Spiritual thoughts are healing restoratives

2. *Consecutive*, by way of consequence. Revenge and justice attends the one, as grace and mercy accompanies the other.

The proof of this is, ver. 7; It is death, because it is enmity to, and aversion from God, who is the fountain of life. It is the description of a natural estate, and what relation a man considered in his corrupt nature bears to God.

Φρονημα. The most refined and elevated thoughts, which have no other ground-work than nature. The highest flights of an unregenerate soul by the wings of the greatest reason. The wisdom and virtues of the heathen, were enmity: therefore translated by some, *sapientia carnis*, the wisdom of the flesh.

της σαρκος. Unregenerate man. Flesh is usually taken in scripture, for the unregenerate part of the soul. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, John 3. 6. Εχθρα. Not *enemy*, but *enmity*.

1. Not *anger*. That is not so bad. It may arise from some distaste: every disgust does not destroy friendship. 2. Not *aversion*. That may be quickly removed. But, 3. *Enmity*. How directly opposite is man to God? God is said to be love, and man enmity, both in the abstract. Like that in *Ezek. 44. 6, Thou shalt say to the rebellion*, מרד rebellion instead of rebellious. Enmity in nature; the nature of God and that of a corrupt man, can never be reconciled.

In the verse, observe, 1. A proposition. *The carnal mind*, &c. 2. The proof. 1. Proposition. 1. The state, *enmity*. 2. The object of this enmity, *God*. 3. The subject or seat of it, *mind*. 4. The qualification, *carnal*. 2. The proof. *It is not subject*, &c. wherein observe, 1. *Wilfulness*. *It is not subject*. The holiness of the law, like the light of the sun, dazzles its eyes, that he cannot endure it. If we be not God's subjects, we must be his enemies: for he that is not with Christ, is against him. 2. *Weakness*. *Neither indeed can be*. It cannot, *quia*

non vult, because it will not, saith Haymo. It is an enemy to it; and therefore will not be subject to its determinations.

1. It cannot be *perfectly* subject. I may be subject to the material part, and outward bark, not to the spiritual and true intendment of the law. 2. It cannot *qua talis*, as such. Sin cannot be reconciled to God, neither can a sinner as a sinner. It must be some superior power that must conquer an enemy that hath possession of a strong fort.

Doct. I. A state of nature is a state of *enmity against God*. II. Man is naturally an enemy to the sovereignty and dominion of God. Not subject to the law of God. By law, I mean not here the moral law only, but the whole will and rule of God, which is chiefly discovered in his law.

For the first doctrine, a state of *nature* is a state of *enmity against God*. 1. For the explication. 2. The confirmation. 3. The application.

I. The explication, And 1. What is *meant* by a natural man, or state of nature?

(1.) By a state of nature is not meant the human nature, or man as a creature consisting of body and soul: then Jesus Christ, who truly and really assumed the human nature, was an enemy to God, as well as we. Therefore some that understand those scriptures which speak of the flesh hindering us, of the natural or fleshly body, are much mistaken: for if the flesh as created, and not as corrupted, did impose a necessity upon us of sinning, it would necessarily follow, that God did first place in us a natural enmity, and so is the author of all our sin. And also that Christ could not be free from this black character, if it be owned (as it must be) that he had a nature of the same kind and mould as ours are.

God did not in creation implant in us a principle of contrariety to him; neither could a God of infinite goodness dash any such blot upon man's nature, for he framed him in an exact harmony to his own

will, and printed him a fair copy without any erratas according to his own image, which is nothing but holiness and love. But our defection from God puts us into this state, which is maintained by our inherent and tumultuous lusts. In our creation there was an union to God; in our corruption a separation from him, whence ariseth an opposition to him; so that it is not created, but corrupted nature, which is here meant.

(2.) Every *profane* man is a natural man, and consequently an enemy. Wicked works are demonstrative, demonstratively denials of God. *In works they deny him, Tit. 1. 16.* Sensual, and *having not the Spirit*, are put together, *Jude 19.* That man that is actuated by sensuality, is not acted by the holy, but by the diabolical spirit. Luxurious persons, that make their belly their God, are termed *enemies to the cross of Christ, Phil. 3. 18.* And if enemies to the cross of Christ, then enemies to God, who was engaged in the greatest design that ever was upon the stage of heaven and earth, at the time of Christ's being upon the cross. And if enemies to the cross of Christ, then enemies to all those attributes of wisdom, power, holiness, truth, justice, mercy, which God glorified in the death of Christ, and in the most illustrious manner.

(3.) Every *unrenewed* man, though never so richly endowed with *morals*, is a natural man. What is called *φρόνημα σαρκός* in the text, is called, *1 Cor. 2. 14, ψυχικός άνθρωπος*, one that hath nothing excellent but a rational soul. As *ψυχικός* is opposed to *πνευματικός*, it is a soul jointured in the richest dowry of nature. And as opposed to *σαρκικός*, a fleshly man, it notes a freedom from gross pollutions and defilements without. A *ψυχικός άνθρωπος*, is one led by the rational dictates of his mind, and *σαρκικός* is a man led by his sensitive affections. Though the one be better than the other, and more agreeable

to the order of nature, yet both being corrupted and defiled, are contrary to God.

Suppose a man with the highest endowments of reason, wisdom, understanding, learning, as wise as Solomon, and suppose him as rich in morals as in intellectuals; yet if he be not *renewed in the spirit of his mind*, Rom. 12. 2, i. e. the more spiritual and rational part of his soul, though there be never so fair a frontispiece, colour, and pretences of friendship, yet such a man is an enemy; because by all that strength of nature he cannot have a knowledge of spiritual things, or a faith in God; and without a knowledge of him, he cannot be subject to him; and without faith it is impossible to do any thing to please him.

The most civilized heathens, who disdained those ugly and carnal sins of drunkenness, lust, &c. yet were possessed by the more spiritual legions of pride and vain glory, &c. Though you have not outwardly the impurity of the flesh, yet you may flow with a greater impurity of the Spirit. External acts of pollution are more abhorred by reason, because they are more brutish, they degrade the nature of a man, and disgrace his person. But in heart-sins, though there be not so much of discredit, there is more of enmity.

2. What *kind* of enmity this is. (1.) I understand it of *nature*, not of actions *only*. Every action of a natural man is an enemy's action, but not an action of enmity. A toad doth not envenom every spire of grass it crawls upon, nor poison every thing it toucheth, but its nature is poisonous. Certainly every man's nature is worse than his actions: as waters are purest at the fountain, and poison most pernicious in the mass, so is enmity in the heart. And as waters relish of the mineral vein they run through, so the actions of a wicked man are tintured with the enmity they spring from, but the mass and strength of this is lodged in his nature. There is in

all our natures such a diabolical contrariety to God, that if God should leave a man to the current of his own heart, it would overflow in all kind of wickedness: for the best mere nature has fundamentally and radically as much of this enmity, as the worst: for the disposition is the same, though the effects may be restrained in some men more than in others. No man is any more born with a love to God, than he is with the knowledge of the highest sciences. There is indeed an active power to the attainment of those by the assistance of a good education; but man hath only a passive power to the other, as being a subject passively capable of the grace of God. The inherency of this enmity in our nature the psalmist expresses, when he tells us, *The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as ever they be born, Psal. 58. 3, 4.* They go sinfully, before they go naturally. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent, which you know is radically the same in all of the same species.

(2.) It is a *state* of enmity. Godly men may do an enemy's action, but they are not in a state of enmity. They may be cheated into sin, but they do not dwell in it; they may fall into it as a man into a ditch, but they lie not in it. There may be some jarrings between God and a regenerate man; God may be displeased with him, and he disgusted with God, and jealous of him, as in the case of *Jonah*, a type of Christ; but there is not a stated war. But a natural man is in a state of universal contrariety.

[1.] *All times*, it is rooted in the nature of a man. It is called a *root of bitterness* planted in a man's disposition: therefore bitterness is a quality essential to it, and inseparable from it: for while it remains a root, it will remain bitter.

You can never suppose a thing to exist, and be without its nature, and the modes and qualities due to such a being; or a man to live, and be without a soul. So you cannot suppose a corrupted creature to

be one moment of time without this enmity, no more than a serpent can be imagined to retain its nature without the venom inherent in it, though there is not at all times the discovery of it.

[2.] In every *sinful act*. Though the interest of particular sins may be contrary to one another, yet they all conspire in a joint league against God. * *Scelera dissident*. Sins in conflict with one another; covetousness and prodigality, covetousness and intemperance cannot agree, but they are all in an amicable combination against the interest of God. † In betraying Christ Judas was acted by covetousness, the High Priest by envy, Pilate by popularity, but all shook hands together in the murdering of Christ. And those various iniquities were blended together, to make up one lump of enmity. Though in every sin there is not an express hatred of God, yet there is *Odium Dei participative*, some participation of hatred of him. As all virtuous actions partake of the nature of love to the chiefest good, our beloved object; so all vicious actions, which are at a distance from the chief end, are marshalled by, and tintured with, that inward enmity which lurks in the soul.

[3.] *Objectively* universal against all the attributes of God. For sin being an opposition to the law of God, is consequently a contrariety to his will, and his understanding, and therefore to all those attributes which flow from his will, as goodness, righteousness, truth; and his understanding, as wisdom, knowledge. Though every law proceeds from the will of the lawgiver, and doth formally consist *in actu voluntatis*, yet it presupposes *actum intellectus*, i. e. Though it consists in the will of the lawgiver, yet it presupposes the wisdom of the lawgiver to be the fountain. As the understanding of God precedes the act of his will, so every sin being against the will of God, is also against

* Seneca.

† Jenkin Jude, Part 2. p. 522.

the infinite reason and wisdom of God, which is the foundation of all his laws.

(3.) This enmity against God is habitually *seated in the mind*. Corruption extends its empire as large as regeneration; but this is seated in the mind, and the most spiritual part of it, *renewed in the spirit of your mind*, Rom. 12. 2; it does not content itself with the outworks of the affections, but triumphs in the chiefest fort of the soul, and there displays its banners. The great contest between God and the devil is in the understanding and will. The standards are first erected there. As in conversion, the mind is first enlightened by God, and the will first inclined; so in seduction, they are first possessed by Satan.

Hence a natural man is described to be one that fulfils the *desires of the mind*, as well as of the flesh, Eph. 2. 3. In this part, wherein God placed the most splendid part of his image, does Satan diffuse his poison: and wisdom, the chiefest flower in the rational part of man, is infected with this plague, for that is *devilish* too, Jam. 3. 15. The mind thus infected, is like those eminent persons, that spread the contagion of their vices to all their attendants. If it be thus in the noblest and governing part of the soul, it must be so also in the other faculties, which are directed by it, and observe the dictates of it. * The other faculties, like common soldiers in a war, fight for the prey and booty; but the mind, the Sovereign, being filled with principles of a more direct contrariety to God, fights for the superiority, and orders all the motions of the lower rout.

But more particularly, there is, *odium aversionis*, as opposed to desire. Thus man hates God, because he turns from him. Man naturally gives his vote for God's absence, and is so far from loving the practice, that his stomach abhors the knowledge of God's ways; that say unto God, *depart from us, for we desire not*

* Gurnal's Christian Armour, something changed.

the knowledge of thy ways. Job. 21. 14. That say unto God. No creature durst be so bold to say it to God's face; but it is the language of our natures, though not of our tongues. *We desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* The laws and ways of God which he commands us to walk in, are too holy, righteous, and spiritual for our corrupted nature.

By sin we stand indebted to God, and therefore have an aversion from him; as debtors hate the sight of their creditors, and are loth to meet them. Adam fled from God, when he had run upon God's score: sin is a disease, and so contrary to that physic which would abate the violence of the humour. God's presence and purity is too dazzling a sight for sinful men: and therefore they cannot look upon God, but are like sore eyes that are distempered with the sun.

Again, there is *odium prosecutionis*, which implies a detestation opposite to love and affection. And so there is not only an aversion from God, but an opposition to him. Both those parts of hatred are described, *And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works. Col. 1. 21.*

Here is, *alienation*, which is aversion; and *enmity*, which is opposition; and both seated in the mind. Though some expound alienation according to outward, enmity according to inward estate. But the apostle declares hatred to be compleat in those two, alienation and enmity, which is both in mind and works; mind as the seat, works as the issues of it. Enemies in disposition and action, principle and execution.

This *odium persecutionis* is, 1. *Natural*, which we call antipathy. And there are steps of this among many creatures: many men have an abhorrency to some kind of meats, and can never endure the taste, nor the sight; and if unawares they eat any of that disagreeing sort, it breeds a distemper in the body. Some men have had antipathy at the sight of some

creatures, as Germanicus, according to Plutarch's relation, could not endure the crowing of a cock. Another the smell or touch of a rose. Antipathies have been observed between some creatures after they are dead. The entrails of a lamb and wolf upon the same instrument can never be tuned. The blood of dragons and eagles can never mix together. Some plants will not grow by one another. There is not such a hatred absolutely between God and man, though there be between God and sin: because there may be a reconciliation between God and a sinner, but not between God and sin: for antipathies are irreconcilable.

The enmity between God and a sinner is not founded in nature, but corrupt nature; and this nature may be removed by satisfaction and regeneration. A fundamental reconciliation was the great intendment of God in the death of Christ: for he was in him, as in his ambassador, reconciling the world unto himself: and an actual reconciliation is made between God and a particular soul at the first instant of faith; though this reconciliation be made between God and man, yet not between God and the corrupt nature of man; for it would be against God's nature to be reconciled to that, though he be his creature; because since his nature is infinitely good, he cannot but love goodness, as it is a resemblance of himself, and consequently cannot but abhor unrighteousness, as being most distant from his nature: and therefore never will express any dearness or intimacy to man's corrupted nature, but to man justified and regenerate.

But the enmity which is between God and sin is founded in the nature of God, and the nature of sin. Sin being the *summum malum*, the greatest evil, is naturally most opposite to God, who is the *summum bonum*, the greatest good. So that God can never be reconciled to sin, or sin to God: For on the one side God must part with his holiness, or sin with

its malice and impurity, and so God cease to be God, or sin cease to be sin.

As God is unchangeably good both in nature and decree, so sin is unchangeably evil. As God can never cease to be good, so sin can never cease to be sin ; because the natural imprinted law of God can never cease to be his law, because it is grounded upon eternal principles of righteousness. God's nature is against sin ; for if his hating sin were a mere voluntary act, he might then either love it, or detest it, which he pleased. But is God unrighteous to love unrighteousness? No, it is a voluntary, natural act.

The hatred sin hath to God, hath no mixture of love ; the hatred a man has to God, may have some mixture of a natural love, because of the kindness he knows he receives from God.

2. *Acquired* hatred, which is grounded upon diversity of interests. Various interests must have contrary means for the attainment of their ends. The interest of a sinner as such, *qua talis*, consists in gratifying the importunities of his lusts, in finding out occasions of pleasures ; and the interest of God lies in vindicating the righteousness of his commands, and maintaining the truth of his threatenings.

This is either, 1. *Direct*. When a man burns with a desire of revenge against another for some real or supposed affront, endeavouring to do him all the ill offices in his power. This none but the despairing and malicious devils are guilty of, who know themselves to be under an inevitable sentence. In this, some place the sin against the Holy Ghost, and make it to be a direct and malicious hatred of God. But that will be a question, whether a creature in a possibility, and probability of salvation, and presuming upon mercy, can maliciously take up arms against God as God. For as I believe, there is no settled opinionative atheism in the world, nor a man ever in any age, that did deliberately think there was

no God, so I believe there is no settled malice against God.

But there may be a malicious contempt of Christ, such as Julian's was, who in scorn termed him the Galilean; *They have hated me, and my Father also, John 15. 24*; me directly, my Father interpretatively or virtually, through many sins. As when he saith, those that *have seen me, have seen my Father also, John 14. 9*. Me plainly, evidently, in my person and works; my Father virtually, as I am his extraordinary ambassador in the world, to represent him; and because they have seen the power of my Father acting in and by me in the miracles I have wrought. So that they hated the Father as they had seen him: i. e. not directly, but in his agent our Saviour. Their hatred of God was as their sight of God had been.

2. *Implicite et interpretative. Idem velle et nolle est proprium amicorum.* Lovers are said to have but one soul, and therefore but one will. Men love not the things that God loves, and therefore may be said to hate him. A man may be said to hate God, as men are said to wrong their own souls; and love death, and despise their own souls: *He that sins against me, wrongs his own soul; all they that hate me love death, Prov. 8. 36. He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his own soul, Prov. 15. 32. Consecutive,* as they do those things that will be an injury unto, and bring death upon them. As a thief may be said in this sense to hate his own life, because he doth those things which will be the occasion and meritorious cause of his destruction.

For no man formally loves death, as death, or despises his own soul, but in doing those things, the effects whereof are such as a man may be said to condemn himself. So men acting those things which jumble with God's law, and stand diametrically opposite to his will, are said to hate God. In this respect, sin is called a contempt of God, not formal and express, but implicit and interpretative, because by sin

the law of God is contemned, and consequently the authority, will, and wisdom of the Law-giver; *They that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. 2. 30.*

The nature of hatred being thus explained, let us see what kind of enmity against God this is. *First.* Negatively. We hate not God *as God*. It is not the primary intention of a creature to set itself against the nature of God. And indeed, it is impossible; because God, absolutely considered, hath all the attractives of love, since the noblest perfections of the creatures are in a more excellent manner united in him as the original. As a man cannot will sin as sin, because it is purely evil; and therefore cannot be the object of the desire, since his will is carried out to things under the notion of good: so we cannot hate God as God, because of the amiableness of his nature; and what we conceive good, cannot be the object of contempt. No man can hate truth as truth, or good as good; because the one is the proper object of his understanding, the other of his will, though he may hate them both under an apprehension, that they are evil, and inconvenient to him.

* God in himself, as he is known by an open vision, cannot be a motive to enmity, no, not to the devils themselves, but as they apprehend his nature destructive of their well-being.

We never yet met with any so monstrously base, as to hate a creature as a creature; or man as man; not a toad or a serpent as a creature, but as it is venomous. And though Timon was surnamed *μισανθρωπος*, because possessed with a melancholy kind of hatred; yet he professed he hated bad men, because of their vices; and good men, because they did not concur with him in so intense and exact a hatred of the enormities of the world. And as it is impossible that we should hate a creature under the notion of a creature, because there is nothing in the

* Non potesesse motivum voluntatis ad odium. Banet in 22 da. q. 34. art. 2.

simple' notion of a creature contrary to us, but in regard of some appropriated nature of this or that creature of a different or contrary stamp to our own; so neither can we hate God as God, because in the general and abstracted notion of God, there is nothing contrary to man, no nor to corrupted man, but he is an infinite mirror of goodness, and ravishing loveliness.

Again, we hate not God *as Creator and preserver*. Hatred always supposes some injury either real or imaginary, or at least the fear of some. And our hatred doth evaporate, when we find him to be good; whom we hated under a conceit of being bad, or when our supposed injuries are recompenced by comforting benefits. What servant can disdain his master for feeding him, or what child hate his father for begetting and maintaining him? This is contrary to the common sparks of ingenuity, which are in the natures of men, and against their natural interest. Reason will acquaint men with a first cause; and that their beings are produced and preserved by a power superior to their own. Who can loathe this infinite surn for the constant refreshment they receive by his beams and influences, any more than a man can hate the created sun, for the kindly warmth darted upon him? In this respect natural men from a common ingenuity, have some starts of love to God, though this is not a love of a right impression; because it respects not the excellency of God's nature, but the agreeableness of his benefits to us, and so is rather a self-love, as terminated principally in our own welfare, sustained and increased by the influence of his providence. Sometimes this love to God, which a wicked man thinks himself endued with, is rather an enmity, when he loves God with an only respect to his own corrupt ends. As when he professes an affection to God for his preservation, that he may the longer continue in the society of his darling lusts. Or when he loves God for the wealth he gives him; because

he hath thereby the more materials for his luxury and voluptuousness; this is such an affection to God, which may be termed an enmity, since it is subordinate to the love of his brutish lusts. It is a love of him for those mercies which he turns into fuel to support his natural contrariety against God.

SECONDLY. Positively.

I. We hate God as a *sovereign*. Man cannot endure a superior; he would be uncontrollable. Pharaoh's principle, that would acknowledge none above him, but proclaimed war against heaven, this dwells naturally in every one; *Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us? Psal. 12. 4. Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go, Exod. 5. 2.* How contemptibly doth he speak of God, which is the dialect of every man's heart? Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, and let my dearest carnal pleasures go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let them depart from me. A desire of being like to God, or equal to him in wisdom, was the first sin of man after the creation; as to be equal to God in authority and power was the first sin of devils, a renouncing of God's dominion. God by a positive law enjoined man not to eat of the forbidden fruit; a thing in itself indifferent, but commanded for the trial of his obedience, to see whether he would own a subjection to God's absolute will, and abstain from things desirable in themselves, because of the mere pleasure of the Creator. But by his transgression he disowned God's right of commanding, and his own duty of obeying.

The devil knows by his own temper, what bait man was most like to catch at, since the noblest creature among the animals aim most at superiority and victory. Nebuchadnezzar, who was for this aspiring humour to be accounted and worshipped as a sovereign god, was as deservedly as disgracefully turned a grazing among the beasts. And the great charge at the last

day against the sons of men, will be, that they would not have God, or Christ of his appointment, to reign over them. *We hate God as a law-giver.* As he is *peccati prohibitor*, *Luke 19. 27.* It is impossible that man should do otherwise, as considered in the nature wherein he stands, because it is as natural to us to abhor those things which are unsuitable and troublesome, as to please ourselves in things agreeable to our minds and humours. But since man is so deeply in love with sin, accounting it the most estimable good, he cannot but hate the law which checks it, both the external precept, and the counterpart of it in his own conscience, because the strictness of the commands molest and shackle him in his agreeable course, and the severity of its threatenings stare him in the face with curses. As the sea foams most, and casts up most mire, when the impetuousness of it is restrained by some rock, or bounded by the shore.

It is not the law that provokes us to sin directly, but accidentally, because of our corruption, contrary to the image of God's purity in the precept. For we look upon God as cruel, and injurious to our liberty and well-being, and commanding those things which in our apprehensions do thwart and contradict our pleasures. This conceit was the hammer whereby the hellish Jael struck the nail into our first parents, which hath conveyed death and damnation together with the same imagination, to all their posterity. *God doth know that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Alas poor soul; God knows what he did, when he forbade you that fruit, he was jealous you should be too happy, and it was a cruelty in him to deprive you of a food so pleasant and delicious, Gen. 3. 5.* It was for this end the law was given with thunderings and lightnings from Mount Sinai, to enforce an awe upon men; God well knowing, how apt we are to break the hedges, and fly from restraints.

The sum is, man would be as a *lamb in a large place*, like a heifer sliding from the yoke, *Hos. 4. 16*; *Mal. 1. 13*. He snuffs at the command of his Lord, and would be subject to no law but his own, and be guided by no will but that of the flesh. Have you not many times wished, that there were no law, or that it were not so strict as to check your darling lusts? What is this but an enmity to the authority of that law you account so burdensome?

2. We hate God as a *judge*. As *autor legis*, and *ultor legis*. As *peccati prohibitor*, and *pœnæ executor*. Fear is often the cause of hatred. * All men have a fear of God, not of offending him, but of being punished by him. Corruption kindles this enmity, but fear like a bellows inflames it. When men know they deserve punishment, they must needs fear, and consequently disaffect both the author and the inflicter of it. Guilt makes malefactors tremble at the report of a judge's coming. All the perfections of God, though never so amiable, cannot produce any true spiritual love in a natural man, though he be never so specious in the eye of the world, or good natured to his fellow-creatures, while he lies under the apprehensions of wrath, and is in his own sense concluded under an eternal doom. If you should tell a prisoner that his judge is a brave comely genteel man, of excellent accomplishments, and unspotted innocency, would this commend the person of the judge to the prisoner? No, because he considers him not in his intellectual or moral endowments, but in his political function, as a judge that will try, and condemn, and take away his life.

This hatred of God is stronger or weaker according as the fear is. And therefore in hell it is in its meridian and maturity, and most proper to the damned spirits. But not so evident in this world, unless a man be brought into such a despairing condition as

* Ουδεις γαρ ο φοβηται φιλει. Arist. Rhet. lib. 2. cap. 4.

Spira was, who professed he hated God upon this account; because the acts of God as a judge are remote, and evils at a distance do not so much affect us because we flatter ourselves with hopes of escape. It is the certainty and approach of judgment that inspires fear. Evils hurt us not by a single apprehension of their nature; for the contemplation may be delightful, as a picture of a storm at sea, or a battle at land; but they affect us as they have relation to us; that which was the devil's language to Christ, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come to torment us before the time?* *Mat. 8. 29.* This is the dialect of our hearts; *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, Job, 21. 14,* of holiness nor thy ways of justice.

Well then, did none of you ever rage against God under his afflicting hand? Were you never like wild beasts, ready to tear in pieces those that would take and tame you? Did you never wish, that God were so careless, as to enact no law to hurt you; and so unrighteous, as to have no justice to punish you? Did you never wish him stripped of his preceptive will, and his revenging arm? Have you not wished sometimes, that the law might be as dead a letter in respect of curses, as it is in respect of conveying strength for the performance of it? that it might be a silent law, like Eli to his sons, never to correct you?

3. When this fear rises high, or men are under a sense of punishment, they hate the *very being of God*. This rises so high, that it aims at the very essence of God, as in Spira's case, who wished that he could destroy him. Since all men are actuated by a principle of self-preservation, and that this principle is universally natural and predominant, it will move them to take away the life of any person, rather than lose their own life by them. When men look upon God as a judge and punisher of their crimes, if they could by any means, yea by the undeifying of God himself, rescue themselves from those fears, there is

self-love enough, and enmity enough against God in them, to quicken them to it. There is no doubt but the damned, if they could, would pull God out of his throne to have ease from those dreadful torments they undergo. And whatsoever fearful apprehensions we have of God in this world, are but the lower degrees of that hatred which the damned have in the highest.

But that I may not send you so far as hell for a proof, I will assert, that the wishing, nay the endeavouring the destruction of God, is fundamentally and seminally in every one of our natures. I will appeal to yourselves; did none of you ever please yourselves sometimes in the thoughts, how happy you should be, how free in your lustful pleasures, if there were no God? Have you not one time or other, wished there were no law given above to restrain you, no conscience within to check you, no judge hereafter to sentence you? And can God be hated worse, than when the destructiōn of his inseparable perfections, his holiness, righteousness, are thought so desirable? It is a wishing the destruction of his being. Hatred is defined by one, to be *appetitus amorendi rem aliquem*.* As love is a desire of union, hatred must be a desire of separation. And *Aristotle* tells us, that hatred is an affection of a higher strain than anger, because it desires the τὸ μὴ εὔχαι, the very not being of the hated object.

As the hatred of sin aims at the destruction of sin, and men's hatred of saints would cause their expulsion out of the world; so the hatred of God is a desire to despoil him of his being. And their not doing it, is not for want of an innate disposition, but for want of strength; for men hate God more than the best saint doth sin. All hatred includes a virtual murder. *Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer, John 3. 15.* If he who hates his brother is, in the court of exact judgment, a murderer of his

* Scaliger Exercit. 316. S. 1.

brother, he that hates God is a murderer of God. The more self-love we have, the more we shall hate that which we judge destructive to us; because the more we wish well to ourselves, the more we wish ill to that which we imagine contrary to our well-being. And since we hate those acts of God which flow from the righteousness of his nature, we consequently rise up to a hatred of God's being; because he could not be God, unless he loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; and he could not testify his love to the one, or his loathing to the other, but in encouraging goodness, and witnessing his anger against iniquity.

Man would have God at the greatest distance from him; and there is no greater distance from being, than not being, *Job 21. 14*, who say unto God *Depart from us.* And *Psal. 14. 1.* The fool hath said in his heart. *No God*, as it is in the Hebrew; I wish there were no God, and this is founded upon sin: for the reason rendered is, that *they are corrupt, and have done abominable works.* Hence is sin by some called *deicidium*, a slaughtering of God: because every sin being enmity to God, doth virtually include in its nature the destruction of God. And since every man naturally is a child of the devil, and is acted by the diabolical Spirit, *The spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, Eph. 2. 2*; he must necessarily have that nature which his Father hath, and the infusion of all that venom which the Spirit that acts him is possessed with, though the full discovery of it may be restrained by various circumstances. And this assertion seems to be intimated in the death of Christ; for when we see, for the satisfaction of the dishonour done to God, Christ must die for sin, it intimates, that if it were possible, God should die by sin. If sin can be expiated by no less than the blood of God, it seems to imply, that in its own nature it aims at no less than the life of God;

because all God's punishments are founded in *legē talionis*, and are highly equitable.

For confirmation, that a state of nature is a state of enmity :—The very design of Christ's coming into the world being an errand of peace, and the management of this design both when he was conversant in the world, and since his ascension, being to reconcile God and man, to promote by his Spirit an acceptance of this reconciliation, plainly discovers the state man was in, wherein man injured God, and was punished by him : for what need of piecing up a friendship, if there had not been an antecedent enmity ?

There was a moral enmity against God on our parts, which must needs draw a legal enmity on God's part against us. But the apostle in *Rom. 5. 10.* declares it : *If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God.* If when we were enemies, *we, all of us* ; not the best saint on earth, nor the most illustrious glorified saint in heaven, but had once this black character of being God's enemy. Not a son of Adam but inherited this abominable character, and had this hostile disposition boiling up against God. Every man naturally is like the lake of Sodom, that no holy motion can flutter over it, but falls down dead, being choaked by those steams which exhale from the corruption of the heart. *Haters of God, Rom. 1. 30.* Θεστυγεις ενυγω signifies to hate a thing as *hell* ; it is derived from τυγε, one of the poetical rivers of hell, and signifies a more intense and rooted hatred than the expression of the LXX, *Psal. 139. 21.* μισωτες θεων. The most desperate enemy God hath now in hell of mankind, had not a blacker soul at his nativity, than every one of us had at ours. *Tit. 1. 16.* The apostle tells us of some that denied God, though they profess they knew him. They knew him notionally, and denied him practically, yea every attribute of his, and his very being. *Denied God!* There are the characters of a deity engraven upon every man

by nature, so deeply in men's consciences, that it is impossible for all the malice of the devil to raze it out. But if we make a judgment of men's hearts by the counterpart of them in their lives, and consider men's practices, which are the best indexes of their principles, we shall quickly find by tracing the streams how corrupt the fountain is.

This enmity is against the sovereignty of God. Men will not have God reign over them: They will not have God for their governor, nor his law for their rule. Our created arms cannot reach heaven, to pull God from his throne; but there is a radical disposition in man to do it, had he ability equivalent to his corruption. For what is the great quarrel between God and man, but this, whose will, and whose authority shall stand? While we exclude him from being the Lord of our hearts, we would exclude him from being the Lord of the world; for that unjust principle which doth deprive him of the heart, would deprive him also of the other: to which God hath no greater right, nor no juster title, than he hath to our heart, over which we will not let him reign.

Sin is therefore called *rebellion*; which is a denial of subjection to him as our Lord; it is an act of disloyalty, a breach of allegiance. As the Jews say of every judgment upon them, That there is some of the dust of the golden calf; i. e. something of the punishment of their first idolatry: so we may say, that in every sin there is a taint of that first prodigious ambition of our first parents, which cost them and their posterity so dear, viz. That we would be as gods, we would be God's equals, if not superiors.

PART II.

ENMITY AGAINST GOD AS A SOVEREIGN.

*In the breach of his law—Unwillingness to know it—
Or to be governed by any law of God—Offers violence to his laws—Hates his own conscience—Sets up another law in himself—Is at greater pains and charge to break God's law than is necessary to keep it—Doing right upon any principle rather than of obedience to God's will—Being more observant of the laws of men than of God's—Unwillingness to have God's laws observed by any—Taking pleasure in seeing his laws broken—Man sets up other sovereigns against God—Idols—Self—The world—Sensual pleasure—Satan—Usurping God's prerogatives—Assuming titles and pretending to acts which belong only to God—Lording over the consciences of others—Prescribing anti-scriptural rules of worship—Subjecting God's truth to the trial of human reason—Prying into futurity—Pronouncing upon the state of others.*

THE enmity against the sovereignty of God, is in three things; 1. In the breach of God's laws. 2. In setting up other sovereigns. 3. In usurping God's prerogative.

First. In the *breach of God's laws.* That servant that doth not perform his master's command, doth virtually deny his authority. If obedience be a sign

of love, disobedience is an argument of hatred. *If you love me, keep my commandments, John 14. 15.* If obedience to God ennoble us with the glorious title of God's friends, *John 15. 14*; disobedience to God must needs expose us to the unworthy character of his enemies. And indeed the breach of God's laws is not only a discarding his sovereignty, but a casting dirt upon his other attributes. For if his command be *holy, just, and good*; if it be the image of God's holiness, the transcript of his righteousness, and the efflux of his goodness, then in the breach of it all those attributes are despised. The law is then slighted as it is a medal of God's holiness, as it is equitable in itself, and as it is in its goodness designed for our conveniency and advantage. Therefore by the breach of one point of the law, we contract virtually the guilt of the contempt of the whole statute book of God; *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all, James 2. 10, 11*; because the will and authority of the Lawgiver, which gives the sanction to it, is opposed; also, because that the authority of the Lawgiver, which is not prevalent with us, to restrain us from the breach of one point, would be of as little force with us to restrain us from the breach of all the rest, when occasion is offered; because also the breach of any one law declares a want of that love which is the sum and spirit of the whole law.

This enmity to God's law, will appear in these ten things.

1. Unwillingness to *know* the law of God, enquire into it, or think of it. Men affect an ignorance of God's command they are loth to inform themselves; they hate the light, which would both discover their spots, and direct their course.

Hence those expressions; *Refusing to hearken, and stopping the ears that we should not hear, Zech. 7. 11. None understands; there is none that seeks after God, Rom. 3. 10*; unwillingness to seek the knowledge of him;

yea, though it be the most advantageous and refreshing to their soul; *yet they would not hear, Isa. 28. 12.* When God presses in upon them by inward motions, or outward declarations of his will, they secretly desire God not to trouble them with his laws, though their hearts bear witness to the righteousness of them. *Which say to the prophets, prophecy not unto us right things: cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us, Isa. 30. 10, 11.* Let not the Holy One of Israel trouble us with any of his laws, but leave us to our sinful labour. Herein God placed their rebellion: *Rebellious children, that will not hear the law of the Lord, ver. 9,* They would have smooth things prophecied to them; they would partake of his mercy, but would not imitate his holiness.

And when any motion of the Spirit thrusts itself in, to enlighten them, they *exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, 2 Cor. 10. 5,* and resist the Holy Ghost, keep their hearts barred, that he may not have admittance. The word *ἀντιστης, Acts 7. 51,* is emphatical, to fall against; as a stone or any other ponderous body falls against that which lies in its way; they would dash in pieces or grind to powder that very motion which is made for their instruction, yes, and the Spirit too which makes it; and that not in a fit of passion, but from an habitual enmity always. Whereas a faithful subject or servant who loves his prince or master, would fain know what his will is, and what laws are ordered, that he may observe them. But when men have a superficial knowledge of God's laws by education, or attendance upon a godly and able ministry, yet they are loth to retain it, negligent in improving it; they easily let it slip from them, their minds have not delight to employ themselves in meditating of it, or to know the spirit of it, which the psalmist fixes as the character of a godly man, *Psal. 1. 2.*

Men are more generally fond of the knowledge of

any thing, than of God's will. Do not the most of men, that are intent upon knowledge, spend more time, and engage more serious and affectionate thoughts in the study of some science or trade, than in the knowledge of God's will? With what readiness and dexterity will a man discourse about philosophy, mathematics, history, &c. but any discourse of God began in company, strikes them dead: he is quite at a loss in the knowledge of him and his will, which was the great end of his coming into the world, and the great concern of his soul.

But if a man doth desire to know the law of God, it is many times more out of a curiosity and natural itch to know, than any design to come under the power of it; therefore many men that can dispute for the principles of religion, are ashamed of the practice, and ashamed to discourse much of the practical part of it; which is a contradictory thing: for can the profession be honourable, if the practice be vile? If the principles be true and good, and worthy to be known, why are they not practiced? If the practice be disgraceful, why are the principles which lead to such practices, professed and studied? Whence can this affected ignorance of God's laws, this careless enquiry into his will arise, but from an enmity against it, for fear they should be disturbed by it in the pursuit of their carnal pleasures? therefore they account the word of the Lord a reproach to them and their ways, and a trouble to have their consciences set on work by the law that galls them, *Jer. 6. 10.*

2. Unwillingness to be *determined* by any law of God. When men cannot escape the convincing knowledge of the law, but it breaks in upon them as the morning light, they set up their carnal resolutions against it. *As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee, Jer. 44. 16:* and harden their hearts with a stoutness against God, *Mal. 3. 13. Refuse to walk in*

his law, Psal. 78. 10. Though it be a *strength to them*, yet they will not, *Isa. 30. 15*, they would rather guide themselves to destruction, than be under God's conduct to happiness: they would rather be their own rulers, than God's subjects. . . . Men naturally affect an unbounded liberty; would not have the bridle of a command to check them, or be hedged in by any law: they think it too slavish a thing to be guided by the will of another: they are well compared to the wild ass, that loves to snuff up the wind at her pleasure in the wilderness: they will take their own course, rather than come under the guidance of God, *Jer. 2. 24*. Since the law checks the inward operations of the soul, and would keep them from inward as well as outward compliances with sin; they therefore account it a heavy yoke to be so strictly regulated as not to have their secret retirements and dalliances with sin in their thoughts.

Let not God speak to us, say the Jews, Exod. 20. 19, 20, lest we die. One would think it was the terror of the thunder-claps wherewith the law was proclaimed, that made them so unwilling to hear God speak to them. But the apostle tells us it was the hatred of the law, itself; *For they could not endure that which was commanded, Heb. 12. 20*; which particle, *for*, shews it to be a reason why they desired the word should not be spoken to them any more. They had a natural unwillingness to be guided by any statute of God's enacting. Had they been only afraid of those terrible lightnings, without any aversion to God himself, methinks they should not so suddenly after have preferred a golden calf, the similitude of the Egyptian idol, and put the name of God upon it, and ascribe to it their deliverance from Egypt, which had been wrought, not by a senseless calf, but an almighty and outstretched arm. Therefore in the charge God brought against them, *Because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes, Lev. 26. 43*; he accuseth them

not only of despising his judgments, but of a rooted abhorreny of them even in their souls. There is not a law but the heart of man naturally hath a secret and rooted detestation of.

Hence man is said to make void the law of God, *Psal.* 119. 126. They have made void thy law. To make it of no obligation to them, as if it were an almanack out of date ; which Christ calls a making the law of none effect, *Mat.* 15. 6. *ἠκυρώσατε*; you have unlorded the law ; put it out of commission ; thrown off all the power and dominion of it : which law God values more than he doth the whole world ; nay, the least tittle of it is so dear to him, that it shall stand, when heaven and earth shall fall. And to vindicate the honour of it, he would have his Son to die for a satisfaction for the breach of it. So that if a man could destroy the whole world, it were not so bad as sin, which is an unlording that which is an act of God's royalty, a copy of his holiness ; whereas the making the world was but an act of his wisdom and executive power ; nay God would not be so angry at it ; because his power is by that contemned ; but in this, his holiness, which is an attribute he doth particularly delight in.

3. The violence man offers to those laws, which God doth most strictly enjoin, and which he doth most delight in the performance of. If a man be willing to be determined by some law of God, it is not because it is his law, but because it doth not run counter to some beloved lust of his. But when God enjoins any thing which is against the beloved interest of the flesh, he flies out in rage against God ; and the interest of his corrupt affection excites him to a loathing of that which is truly good. The strictness of the law, which natural men account their band and shackle, is the ground of their quarrel with God, the reason of their rage, and their counsel against God and his Christ : *Let us break their bands, and cast away their cords from us : Psal.* 2. 3. All this was,

ver. 1, 2, for the strictness of his law ; which Grotius understands of the law of Moses, and all the rites of it ; but meant certainly of the evangelical law of Christ, the psalm being a prophecy of him.

If a man be willing to comply with any law of God, it is as it prohibits some outward carnal sins ; but the more spiritual the law, the more averse the heart. The more spiritual the law is, the more doth indwelling sin exercise its power, and endeavour to increase our slavery ; *The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Rom. 7. 14.* The apostle there intimates, that our carnality, our slavery to sin, the enmity of our hearts to God, is best discerned by comparing man with the spirituality of the law. The Jews were much for sacrifices, and very diligent in them, which were but the skirts of the law, and which God did not principally require at their hands ; but for holiness, mercy, piety, and other duties most valued by God, they were mere strangers unto them. Men will grant God the lip, and the ear, but deny him that which he most calls for, viz. the heart. The more earnestly conscience doth at any time urge the law, the more furiously will the flesh act against it. But *sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. Rom. 7. 8.* Like as the boisterous waves, which roar most at that bank or rock which forbids their progress ; or like wind, which pent within the narrow compass of the earth, grows more violent.

Had not God commanded some things so strictly, they had not been broken so frequently. God's righteous laws, which are intended to check our corruptions, are occasions to enrage them ; as the vapour in a cloud ends in a tearing clap of thunder when it meets with opposition. We shall find our hearts most averse from the observation of those laws which are eternal and essential to righteousness, which God could not but command, as he is a righteous governor ; in the observance of which we come nearest to

him, and express his image more illustriously. As those laws for an inward and spiritual worship of God, the loving God with all our heart and soul; God cannot in regard of his holiness and righteousness, command the contrary to this. These our hearts most swell at; those our corruptions most oppose, whereas those laws that are only morally positive, or those that are only positive, and have no intrinsic righteousness in them, but depend purely upon the will of the Lawgiver, and may be changed at pleasure, (which the other that have an intrinsic righteousness cannot :) such as the ceremonial part of worship, and the ceremonial law among the Jews; these we can comply better with, than with those laws which have an essential righteousness in them, and express more in them the righteousness of God's nature.

4. Man hates *his own conscience*, when it puts him in mind of the law of God. Man cannot naturally endure a quick and lively practical thought of God and his law, and is an enemy to his own conscience, for putting him in mind of God. This is evidenced by our stifling of conscience, when it doth dictate any practical conclusions from the law, and would stamp suitable impressions upon the soul. As it is an evidence of an enmity in one man against another, when he cannot bear his company, nor endure to hear him speak; so it is an evidence of an enmity to God, when a man cannot endure to listen to that which is in himself, and more intimate with him than any friend he hath, for the wholesome and necessary advice it gives him as God's viceroy in him. Which is not an enmity to conscience itself, or to its act of self-reflection, but to the matter of it as it is God's viceroy and representative, and bears the marks of his authority in it, and presseth the holy law of God upon the mind and heart.

Because in other cases this self reflecting act of conscience is welcome, and is cherished, where it doth

not act in a way of sovereignty derived from God, but suitable to natural affections. As suppose a man hath in a passion struck his child that caused some great mischief to him, his conscience reflecting upon him afterwards, will be welcome, and shall work some tenderness in him, which it shall not do in the more spiritual concerns of God, but shall rather be loathed by him as a busy-body. And by such frequent oppositions of conscience, this enmity does so far prevail, that the sovereignty of conscience seems to be quite cashiered, insomuch that it ceaseth with any efficacy to spur on the soul to good, or withdraw it from evil; and being overpowered by sinful habits, its commands grow weak, and it sits labouring like a magistrate that cannot stem the tide of ill manners in a commonwealth: it enjoins as if it had no mind to be observed. It is upon this account that men oftentimes cannot endure to hear any gracious discourses of God, because they excite unwelcome reflections in their own consciences; which instead of reforming them, do more distemper them; as the sweetest perfumes affect a weak head with aches.

Now since men hate their own consciences for putting them in mind of God's laws, it is clear that they hate God himself, because conscience is God's officer in them: since they would destroy the memorials and prints of God in the conscience; since they would destroy God's commissioner for doing his work, they would destroy God himself. The apostle therefore calls disobedience to the light of nature, a contention; *To them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, Rom. 2. 8, ἐπιθετικας*, that act out of contention; it must be a contention against conscience, the light of nature, and consequently against God; for the apostle in that chapter speaks of disobedience to the light of nature; they obey not the truth, out of contention against it, and against God, who has published that truth, and had imprinted it on their souls as a guide to them; for God hath put into man

a conscience as his deputy, to have a command over him, and to keep up his prerogative as a Lawgiver in him.

And as the disowning the principles of the christian doctrine, after a taste and profession, is a crucifying of Christ; *Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, Heb. 6. 6;* and a real acting that in spirit upon his doctrine, which the Jews did upon his body; it being an accounting him an impostor, and disowning all the excellency of his person and offices; and an implicit assertion, that there is nothing in him worthy their desire; and this crucifying *ἑαυτοῖς*, (it may be *in themselves*, as well as *to themselves*) in themselves the common works of Christ upon them, was in effect the killing of his person; so by the rule of proportion, every sin against conscience, and blotting out common principles, is not only a contention against God, but an interpretative destroying of him, and putting God to shame, who is the engraver of those principles, and that law of nature in man.

5. Man sets up *another law* in him, in opposition to the law of God. A sinner looks upon God as too severe a task-master, and his laws as too hard a yoke; as though God were cruel and injurious to the liberty of his creature, and envied man of well being, and a due pleasure; *God knows that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, Gen. 3. 5.* It was the old charge the devil brought against God to Eve, and the same impressions he makes still upon the minds of those children of disobedience, in whom he works, and fills them with unjust reflections upon God. Man having this conceit wrought in him, will be a law to himself, and will frame a rule subservient to his own ends; *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, Rom. 7. 23;* which is called the law of sin, and is set up in a warlike and authoritative opposition against the law of God in the mind, *νόμον ἀντισταναμενον*. This law of

sin is nothing else but the setting up our own corrupt appetite and will against God. As corrupt reason is opposed to gospel, so corrupt will is opposed to law.

Sin having set up this law, makes it the measure and rule of righteousness, and measures also the righteousness of God's law, by this law of its own framing; nay, measures the holiness and righteousness of God himself by it. This is horrible, to make God's law no holier than our own, and to square God's holiness and righteousness according to our conceptions; as if God's holiness were to be tried by our measures, and judged by our corruption; *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself, Psa. 50. 21.* This men do when they plead for sins as little, as venial, as that which is below God to take notice of; because they themselves think it so, therefore God must think it so too. Man with a giant-like pride, would climb into the throne of the Almighty, and establish a contradiction to the will of God by making his own will, and not God's, the square and rule of his actions. This principle commenced, and took date in paradise, when Adam would not depend upon the will of God revealed to him, but upon himself; and his own will, and thereby make himself as God.

This is the hereditary disease of all his posterity; to affect an independency, and leave God's directions, to be his own guide. And this is the great controversy that has been ever since between God and man, whether he or they shall be God; whether his reason or truths, or their reason; his will or theirs, be of most force. Just as the dispute was between Pharaoh and God, who should be God; whether the great Jehovah, or a petty king of Egypt. And what saith the psalmist? they say of their tongues, *Our tongues are our own, who shall controul us?* but more truly the language of men's hearts, our wills are our own, who shall check us? This is the thing God con-

demns in the Jews; *A rebellious people, that walk after their own thoughts, Isa. 65. 2.* They would set up their own thoughts above his precepts, as though their vain imaginations were a more just and holy rule than the infinite perfect will of God: *We will walk after our own devices, Jer. 18. 12.* We will be a law to ourselves; let God take his way, and we will take ours.

It is not perhaps so heinous an idolatry to set up a graven image, a senseless and a sinless stock or stone, as for a man to set up his own sinful corrupt affections, and devote himself to a compliance with them, in opposition to the righteous will of God.

6. In being at *greater pains and charge* to break God's law, then is necessary to keep it. How will men rack their heads to study mischief, wear out their time and strength in contrivances to satisfy some base lust, which leaves behind it no other recompence but a momentary pleasure, attended at length with inconceivable horror; and cast off that yoke which is easy, and that burden which is light, in the keeping whereof there is great reward; *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul, Mic. 6. 7, 8.* They in the prophet would be at the expence of one thousand of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; offer violence to the principles of nature, give the first-born of their bodies for the sin of their souls, rather than to *do justice, love mercy, or walk humbly with God*; things more easy in the practice than the offerings they wished for.

Thus men would rather be sin's drudges, than God's freemen; and neglect that service wherein is perfect freedom, for that wherein there is intolerable slavery; they will make a combustion in their consciences, violate the reason of their minds, impair the health of their bodies in contradicting the laws of God, and

prefer a sensual satisfaction with toil here, and eternal ruin hereafter, before the honour of God, the dignity of their nature, or happiness, or peace and health, which might be preserved with a cheaper expence than they are at to destroy them.

7. In doing that which is just and righteous upon *any other consideration*, rather than of obedience to God's will. When men will indent with God, and obey him so far as may comport with their own ends. Unless God will degrade himself, to submit to the conditions of their interest, they will pay him no duty of obedience, nor render him a grain of service. What is hypocrisy, a sin so odious to God, but performing duties materially good, upon any other consideration, rather than that of God's sovereignty?

1. Out of respect to some *human* consideration. When men will practise some points of religion, and walk in the track of some laws of God, not out of conscience to the command, but the agreeableness of it to their humour, constitution, or nature; out of the sway of a natural generosity, the dictate of carnal reason, the bias of secular interest; not from an holy affection to God, an ingenuous sense of his authority, or voluntary submission to his will. As when a man will avoid intoxication, not because God forbids it, but because it is attended with bodily indispositions. Or when a man will give alms, not with respect to God's injunction, but to his own natural compassion, or to show his generosity. This is obedience to his own preservation, the interest of moral virtue, not to God.

Though it may look like virtue, yet when it is done from custom and example, without a due regard to our Sovereign, we may, in the doing it, be rather accounted apes than christians, or indeed men. This seems to be obedience in the act, but disobedience in the motive; for it is not a respect to God, but to ourselves; at the best it is but the performance of the material part, without the spiritual manner, which is

most regarded by God. Besides, if we observe any law upon the account of its suitableness to our natural sentiments, or carnal designs, we shall as readily disobey when it crosses the purposes of our minds, or desires of the flesh; for our obedience will be changeable, according to the mutations we find in our own humours. How can that be entitled an affection to God, which is as mutable as the interest of an inconstant mind?

And Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, the days of mourning for my Father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob, Gen. 27. 41. So many children, that expect at the death of their parents great inheritances, may be very observant of them; not because they respect God's commands in it, but because they would not frustrate their hopes by any disobliment. Esau had no regard of God in decreeing his brother's death, though he was awed by the reverence of his father from a speedy execution. He considered, perhaps, how justly he might lie under the imputation of hastening Isaac's death, by depriving him of a beloved son. But had the old man's head been laid, neither the contrary command of God, nor the nearness of a fraternal relation, could have dissuaded him from the act, any more than they did from the resolution.

Whence it is, that many men abstain from gross sin only out of love to their reputation; they act that wickedness privately, which if seen or taken notice of by others, would overspread their faces with blushing and confusion. He may have his mind in a brothel-house, notwithstanding God's prohibition, but restrain his body for fear of disgrace. He may commit murder in his heart, when the fear of punishment shall tie up his hands. Has not then our outward credit more power over us than God? And do we not sooner observe the opinion of the world, which frights us, than the authority of God which commands us? Is

It not a monstrous thing to be swayed by every thing but the right motive? To let every thing be a chain to bind us to the doing good, or eschewing evil, rather than God's law in his word, or the natural law of reason implanted in us? Or to be moved rather by the examples of men that are just, or the customs of the places where we live, than to act in conformity to the righteous nature of God? How great an evidence is this of our enmity to God, or at least a great want of affection!

(2.) Out of affection to some *base lust*, some cursed end. The Pharisees were devout in long prayers, not that God might be honoured, but themselves esteemed by men. Ambition may be the spring and soul of men's devotions. Jehu was ordered to cut off the house of Ahab; the service which he undertook was in itself acceptable, but corrupt nature acted that which holiness and righteousness commanded: God appointed it to magnify his justice, and Jehu acted it to satisfy his revenge or ambition: he did it to fulfil the will of his lust, not the will of his true Lord. Jehu applauds it as zeal, and God abhors it as murder, *Hos.* 1. 4. We may show our hatred to God, and provoke him, in doing the thing which he particularly enjoins us. This is a compliance with the design of some carnal lust, more than with the authority of the Lawgiver. It is a service not to God for his own sake, but to ourselves for our sin's sake. It is rather a casting down the will of God from commanding, to set our own in its place. Nothing more positively commanded, both in nature's law and the gospel, than to pray and worship God. Men may observe some laws, to have the better convenience to break others. The Pharisees were great observers of this, they prayed, and to outward appearance devoutly, with a zeal (if zeal may be measured by length); but to what end? Not that God might be honoured, but themselves esteemed; nay more cursed, *to devour widows' houses*; that men might be induced

by that appearance of devotion to make them executors of their wills, and guardians of their children; seoffees in trust for their widows, and so they might get a good share for themselves.

(3.) Out of a *slavish* fear. In the doing any thing out of this principle, men are rather enemies than friends. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, 1 John 4. 18; because fear hath torment.* If fear be inconsistent with love, it must be the property of hatred. If perfect love doth cast out fear, then perfect fear doth cast out love, and nourish enmity. If fear be a torment, the effects of it cannot be a pleasure; and the duties flowing from it have a spice of that hatred which is an inseparable companion of that passion, and are done rather to appease their fears, than to pleasure their Creator. Just as Pharaoh parted with the Israelites, so do some men with some sins, not out of love to God's law, but for fear of a further wrath, or because of the smart of present judgments. Well then, how can we discharge ourselves from this accusation of enmity to God, when we will be excited to a performance of good, and abstinence from evil, by any thing of a less authority, as the presence of a child, the sentiments of the world, the preservation of our own reputation, and the fear of punishment? So that actions materially honest in men, may be rather a fruit of passion than reason; and that which we call our obedience, a product of the bestial part in us, rather than that of the man.

8. In being *more observant of the laws of men, than of the law of God.* The fear of man is a more powerful curb to retain men in their duty, than the fear of God: for men are restrained from breaking human laws, for fear of the present penalties annexed to them; but they encourage themselves in the breach of divine by God's forbearance; whereby they attribute a greater right of dominion to a man, than they will acknowledge to be in God. They *willingly walk after the*

commandment of man, though in case of idolatry, but like snails creep after the commandment of God, if they move at all. So they made the king glad with their lies, they cheered his heart with their ready obedience to his command for idolatry, against the counsel of God, and warnings of the prophets. And they, contrary to the speech of Christ, fear him that can kill the body, more than that God who can destroy both body and soul; and are scared more by the frowns of men, than the power of God. It is natural in all ages. It was Hierom's complaint, timent leges humanas, at non divinas; quasi majora sint imperatorum scuta quam Christi, leges timemus, evangelia contemnimus.*

Without question, man is obliged to obey his Creator, without consulting whether his commands are agreeable to the institutions of men. For if we obey him because men's laws enjoin the same, we obey not God but man, human laws being the chief motive of our obedience. This is to vilify God's sovereignty, and lay it under the hatches of men's authority, since we thus slight the duty which in point of right he may demand of us, and pay with ungrateful returns so liberal a benefactor: for men whose laws we principally regard, were never the principal author of our being; and the instrumental preservation we have by them, is not without the providential influence of that Lord whose authority we subject to theirs. Why should we readily submit to human laws, and stagger at divine? Why should we depose God from his right of governing the world, and value men's laws above our Maker's? Why should we make God's authority of a less concern to us than that of a justice of peace, or a petty-constable; as though they were God's superiors, and obedience more rightfully due to them, than to him? What a contempt of God is this: It is to tell God,

* Hierom. vol. 1. Epist. 2. p. 11. b.

I will break the sabbath, swear, revile, revel, were it not for the curb of national laws, for all thy precepts to the contrary.

9. In man's *unwillingness* to have God's laws observed by any. Man would not have God have a loyal subject in the world. What is the reason else of the persecution of those who would be the strictest observers of God's injunctions, as if they were the most execrable persons under the cope of heaven? What is the reason the seed of the serpent hates the seed of the woman, with as much vehemency as the holy angels do the most prodigious villains? It is ordinary for profane men to look upon such as would walk before God unto all well pleasing, as strange and abominable monsters. *Wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them to the same excess of riot; speaking evil of you,* 1 Pet. 4.

4. *Speaking evil of you;* βλασφημῶντες, railing, libelling the whole profession, loading them with many opprobrious epithets: because they will not be as diffusive in sensuality as themselves: because *they run not,* εἰς ἀσωτίας ἀναχνοῖν; thus censuring those acts of theirs, which are pleasing to God, at the bar of prophaneness.

It is not for any wrong done to them, that they thus hate them, but because they will not injure God, and transgress his laws so much as themselves do. How clear a discovery is this of men's natural unwillingness to suffer God to have the least grain of obedience in the world, when they are angry that any bear a veneration to his laws, and that others will not run into the same career, and be in arms against God as well as they? Hence it is that the holiest persons have been most persecuted: amongst the Jews, Isaiah sawed to death, Jeremiah stoned, Zacharias killed at the altar, Elias put to flight. Among the christians, all the apostles but John put to death: the holiest men have been the greatest sufferers. Among the heathen, Socrates condemned

to poison. And the reason is, because they have more honourable thoughts of God, and would maintain the interest of God in the world.

10. In the *pleasure* we take to see his laws broken by others. Sin is the greatest evil that can happen to God; and there is nothing man doth more care and gratify himself in, than to see a creature bemired with it. And indeed, sin is the very essence of most of the mirth in the world, Job so well knew it, that he rose every morning to make an atonement for his sons, who he knew could not be without many erratas in their jollities. This indictment the apostle brings among the rest against the Gentiles; *Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them, Rom. 1. 32.* Do not men often make that the object of their laughter, which is the object of God's infinite hatred? Are not other men's sins the subject of our sport and mirth, which should be the subject of our pity and sorrow? Pity to the sinner, and sorrow for the sin. What is this but an evidence of a rooted hatred of God in our nature, when we please ourselves with any dishonour done to him by others? For it is put among the noble attributes of love, 1 *Cor. 13. 6*, that it *rejoiceth not in iniquity*; neither its own iniquity, nor other men's. To rejoice in it then must be an accursed quality belonging to hatred; yet how many are there in the world, that cannot see others dishonour God, without some sort of satisfaction; they are displeas'd with his glory, and pleas'd with his dishonour.

Secondly. We are enemies to God's sovereignty, in setting up *other sovereigns* in the stead of God. If we did dethrone God to set up an angel, or some virtuous man; it would be a lighter affront; but to place the basest and filthiest thing in his throne, is intolerable. What we love better than God, what we sacrifice all our industry to, what we set our hearts most upon, what we grieve most for, when we miss of our end, we prefer before God.

1. *Idols.* Though so palpable idolatry be not committed by us, yet it was natural to mankind; since we know all nations were over-run with it, *Josh. 24.*

2. Since the father of the faithful was an idolater before he was a believer. And his posterity the Jews, who had heard God himself speak to them from Mount Sinai, were no sooner departed from the foot of the mountain, but they adored a golden calf in his stead; and this sin did run in the blood of all their posterity; since we find God charging them with it through the whole Old Testament; and it was not rooted out till the seventy years' captivity in Babylon. And that the naturalness of it to mankind may further appear, consider what incentives against it the Jews had. They had the greatest appearances of God, particular marks of his favour, his judgments and statutes, which the Psalmist (*Psal. 147. 19, 20.*) sets an emphasis upon, that he had not dealt so with every nation, no, not with any nation. They had the visible signs of his presence, the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day; they were more particularly under his indulgent care; he had altered the course of nature, and wrought miracles for their deliverance; rained manna from heaven to spread their table, carried them in his bosom; yet those wretches were throwing down God, to make room for their golden calf.

This idolatry is as absolute a degrading and vilifying of God as hell itself could invent; it is a real calling him by the names of all those loathsome, senseless creatures so odious, as images of him. As if God were no better than a stone, a piece of carved brass or wood, of no greater excellency than an image or puppet; this is a denying of God. Job speaking, that he had not kissed his hand, or made obeisance to idols; for then, saith he, *I should have denied the God that is above, Job 31. 28.* It is called a loathing God, who is the husband of christians; a loathing of all his authority over them, *Exek. 16. 45.* The giving ado

ration to an image which belongs to God, is a making it equal to him, if not above him; for by such a veneration they evidence, that God is no better in their apprehension than the stock they worship. The heathen world is at this day drenched in this kind of idolatry, and most part of the christian world are subject to the remains of this pagan sin; as the papists, who adore for their Saviour a little wafer, which perhaps the mice have bitten, and flies have cast their excrements upon.

2. We are enemies to God's sovereignty in setting up *self*. Man imagined at first, that by eating the forbidden fruit, he should have a knowledge of good and evil, and to be independent upon God, and founded upon himself, and his own will. This self in us is properly the old Adam, the true offspring of the first corrupted man. This is the great antichrist, the great anti-god in us, which sits in the heart, the temple of God, and would be adored as God, would be the chiefest, as the highest end. This is the great usurper in the world, for it invades the right of God; it is the most direct compliance, and likeness to the devil, whose actions centre wholly in malicious self-will; in this respect I suppose the devil is called *the god of this world*, because he acts so, as if the world should only serve his ends.

Self is the centre of many men's religious actions; while God seems to be the object. Self is the end; *Did you fast unto me? Zech. 7. 5.* This being the motive of hypocrisy, makes it more idolatry, and so more odious to God; other sins subject only the creature to self, but this subjects the soul, and even God himself, to corrupt self. Self-love leads the way; *Men shall be lovers of their own selves, 2 Tim. 3. 2;* to that black catalogue he seems to speak of that black regiment which march behind it, and is concluded with a *form of godliness, and denying the power of it;* and a denying the power of godliness, is a denying the sovereignty of God. The righteousness a man

would establish in opposition to God, is called a man's own ; a righteousness of his own framing, that hath its rise only from himself, *Rom. 10. 3.* Going about to *establish their own righteousness.*

Sin and self are all one ; what is called a *living in sin* in one place, *Rom. 6. 2,* is a living to self in another ; *That they which live, should not live to themselves, 2 Cor. 5. 15.* What a man serves, and directs all his projects, and the whole labour of his life to, that is his god and lord, and that is self. All inferior things act for some superior as their immediate end ; this order hath nature constituted ; the lesser animals are designed for the greater ; the irrational for man, and man for something higher and nobler than himself ; for all beings naturally should, in their several stations, tend to the service of the first being. Now to make ourselves the end, and all other things to act for ourselves, is to make ourselves the supreme being, to deny any superior as the centre, to which our actions should be directed, and usurp God's place, who alone being the Supreme Being, can be his own end ; for if there were any thing higher and better than God, his own purity and goodness would cause him to act for that as more noble and worthy.

I appeal to you, whether you have not sometimes secret wishes ; that you were in the place of God ; for where there is a slavish fear of him, there must needs be such wishes, according to the degrees of fear ; and so you have wished God undeified, that you might be advanced to the Godhead.

This some think to be the sin of the devils, affecting an independency on God by a proud reflection upon their own created excellency, and at least a delightful wish, if not an endeavour, to make themselves the ultimate end of all their actions.

3. We are enemies to God's sovereignty in setting up *the world.* When we place this in our heart, God's proper seat and chair, we deprive God of his propriety, and do him the greatest wrong, in giving the pos-

session of his right to another. The apostle gives covetousness no better title than that of idolatry, *Col. 3. 5*. And the Psalmist puts the atheist's cap upon the oppressor's head; *Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord, Psal. 14. 4*. What we make the chief object of our desires, is to us in the place of God. The poor Indians made a very natural and rational consequence, that gold was the Spaniards' god, because they hunted so greedily after it. This is an intolerable dethroning of God, to make that which is God's footstool to climb up into his throne; to bow down to an atom; a little dust and mud of the world, a drop out of the ocean; to set that in thy heart, which God hath made even below thyself, and put under thy feet; and to make that which thou tramplest upon, to tread down the right God hath to thy heart. Alas! who serves God with that care and with that Spirit that he serves the world with?

4. We are enemies to God's sovereignty in setting up *sensual pleasures*. Love is a commanding affection, and gives the object a power over us; what we chiefly love, we readily obey. Now men are said to be *φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλοθεοί* 2 *Tim. 3. 4*; a glutton's belly is said to be *his god*, because his projects and affections are devoted to the satisfaction of that; and he lays in not for the service of God, but a magazine for lust. If you preferred some honourable thing which might perfect your natures, as learning, wisdom, moral virtues; though this were an indignity to be censured by the Judge of all the world, yet it would be more tolerable; but to consecrate your heart and time to a sordid voluptuousness, and feed it with the cream of your strength, this is an inexcusable contempt, to pay a quick and lively service to an effeminate delight, which is only due to the supreme Lord.

Does not that man dethrone God, and hate him, that will be under the command of a swinish pleasure;

and make that the supreme end of his life and actions, rather than to be under the righteous government of God? The greatest excellency in the world is infinitely below our Creator; how much more must a bestial delight be below him which is so exceedingly disgraceful to, and below the nature of man? If we should love all the creatures in heaven and earth above God, it were more excusable than to degrade him in our affections beneath a brutish pleasure. Why doth any man court an ignoble sensuality with the displeasure of God, hell, and damnation at the end of it, if he did not value it above God, as well as above his own soul? The more sordid any thing is that we set up in the place of God, the greater is the despite done to him, *Ezek. 8. 5*. When the prophet saw the image of jealousy at the gate, God tells him there were greater abominations than that, which are described, *ver. 10, Creeping things, and abominable beasts, viz. the Egyptian idols.* The viler the thing is which possesses our heart, the greater slight is put upon God, and the greater the abomination.

5. We are enemies to God's sovereignty in setting up *Satan*. Every sin is an election of the devil to be our lord: if sin had a voice, it would give its suffrage for such a lord as would favour its interest. As the Spirit dwells in a godly man to guide him, so doth the devil in a natural man, to direct him to evil, *Eph. 2. 2, 3*; so that every sin is an effect of the devil's government: therefore sins are called his lusts, which natural men (who being the devil's children; are under his paternal government) fulfil and do with a resolute obedience, *His lusts you will do, John 8. 44*. If we divide sins into spiritual and carnal, which division comprehends all sin, we shall find that in both; we own the devil's authority either in obeying his commands, or in conforming to his example. Some are said to be his lusts *subjective*, as he commits them; others *dispositive*, as he directs them. In spiritual he is an actor, in carnal a tempter. In

carnal, men obey his commands ; in spiritual, they model themselves according to his pattern : in the one they are his servants, to do his work ; in the other his children, to partake of his nature. In the one we acknowledge him as our master ; in the other we own him as our copy. In both we derogate from God's sovereignty over us, whom we are bound to imitate, as well as to obey. Every sin, in its own nature, is a communion or society with Belial, a fighting for the devil against God ; it is the end of act, though it be not the intention of the agent. Every sin is the devil's work, and therefore the choice of it is a preferring his service before God's. The sin of Saul, though in a small matter, and not in any natural, but positive command, is equalled to the sin of witchcraft, which, you know, is a covenanting with the devil to yield obedience to him, 1 *Sam.* 15. 23.

What a monstrous baseness is this, to advance an impure spirit in the place of infinite purity ; to embrace the great ringleader of rebellion, above the contriver of our reconciliation ; the only enemy God hath in the world, who drew all the rest into the faction against him, before him who is ready to pardon us upon our revolt from his adversary ? To affect that destroyer above our preserver and benefactor ? To esteem him as the exactest pattern, and the greatest lord, as though he had created us, provided for us, and in mercy watched over us all our days. What a prodigious enmity is this, to offend God, to pleasure the devil, and injure our Creator, to gratify our adversary ! Have we nothing to prefer before him, but the deadliest enemy that both God and our souls have in the world ? Must we side with our tormentor against our preserver ? Shall he which will fire us for ever, be valued above him who would wipe all tears from our eyes ? Oh let us blush, if any spark of ingenuity be left ; and let our hatred of God change its object, and boil up against ourselves for our abominable ingratitude.

3. In *usurping God's prerogative*, and exacting those observances which belong to God. We destroy his sovereignty in deifying and rewarding men for things done in opposition to the law of God, in putting glorious titles upon the vilest acts, naming ambition, generosity; murder, valour, &c. 1. In challenging *titles and acts of worship due only to God*. What act of worship is there due to God, but man hath one time or other challenged it as pertaining to him? Darius for thirty days must have all petitions put up to him, as though he could supply the wants of all creatures, *Dan.* 6. 7, 8, 9. Alexander would be worshipped as God; after him Antiochus, whom God calls a vile person. The pope makes up the number in the preface the canonists put to his decrees: *Edictum domini deique nostri*. In men's equaling themselves to God. The first man would know as God. Babel builders would dwell as God. Rabbins tell us, that Eve was told by the devil, that if she eat the forbidden fruit, she should make a world as God. The Pope will sit in the temple of God, and pardon sins as God; exalts himself above all that is called God, shewing himself that he is God.

2. Usurping God's prerogative, in *lording over the consciences* and reasons of others. Whence else springs the restless desire in some men, to model all consciences according to their own wills, which belongs to a greater power than man is capable of? Ferdinand's speech was eminent, who when by the persuasion of others, with much reluctancy on his part he had passed an edict against the protestants, &c. said, "I expected such a thing, when I would take upon me the prerogative of God to be Lord over men's consciences." We usurp God's prerogative, when we are angry that others are not of our minds and judgments; when they will not be blind servants to our opinion, in endeavouring to have our own fancies, yea and passions, though never so boisterous and ridiculous, to be a measure to others. When

we are pertinacious in any doubtful opinion, and assume to ourselves infallibility of judgment, as if our sentiments were as firm as divine decrees; what is this, but an exalting ourselves above all that is called God, to erect an unlimited power over other men's reasons and judgments, as though it were as infallible as God, and all others differing from us under blindness and error.

3. Usurping God's prerogative, in *prescribing rules of worship* which ought only to be appointed by God. In putting out, or leaving in, what they think fit to be the rule of worship; in prescribing by human laws, what they judge good and right in divine. All the reason under heaven could not have informed us what God was in himself, or what worship he expected of us, without supernatural revelation: therefore, when God hath fixed it, for men to be making alterations in it, and additions to it, is an intolerable invading of his right, at least it is an equalling our own fallible inventions with his infallible oracles, imperiously to obtrude upon people human inventions with as much authority as if they had been signed and sealed in heaven, and were unquestionably warranted by God himself. The prescribing the manner of worship, is a part of God's sovereignty; therefore in the two last chapters of *Exodus*, where the erecting of the tabernacle is described, those words, *As the Lord commanded*, are seventeen times inserted. And to prescribe any thing which God hath not commanded (though he hath not forbidden it) is such an invasion of his prerogative, that he hath punished it by a remarkable judgment. *Lev. 10. 1.* When Nadab and Abihu took strange fire, i. e. other fire than what was upon the altar, wherewith to kindle their incense, though God had given no command to the contrary, yet because he had not commanded the offering with strange fire, he cut them off by a terrible judgment.

And it is to be observed, that none are more

irreconcilable enemies to the true power and spirit of godliness, than the usurpers of this prerogative of God, the Lord in just judgment leaving them to the dotages of their own minds, and the enmity of their hearts against him, being successors of the pharisees in their judicial blindness, as well as their usurpations of God's authority.

4. In subjecting the truths of God to *the trial of reason*, or trying God's oracles at the tribunal of our shallow reason. It is a part of God's sovereignty to be the interpreter, as well as maker of his own laws, as it is a right inherent in the legislative power among men. So that it is an invasion of his right to fasten a sense upon his declared will, which doth not naturally flow from the words: for to put any interpretation according to our pleasure upon divine as well as human laws, contrary to the true intent, is a virtual usurpation of this power; because if laws may be interpreted according to our humours, the power of the law would be more in the interpreter than in the legislator. And it is the worse when men try the word not by their reasons, but by their fancies and humours, and put allegories, the brats of crazy or humorous fancy, as the genuine meaning of the word of God.

5. In *judging future events*, as if we had been of God's privy-council when he first undertook any great action in the world.

6. In *censuring others' state*. It is an intruding into God's judicial authority. Who hath made me a judge? was Christ's plea, *Luke 12. 14*. Who art thou that judgest another's state, as though thou wert Lord of the heart of thy brother, and God had given over his jurisdiction over the heart to thee; as though he were to stand or fall to thy censure?

PART III.

ENMITY AGAINST THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN
GENERAL.

Swearing under religious pretensions—Charging sin upon God—Hating the image of God's holiness in others—Indulging debasing notions of the holy nature of God—High offence to God—Carnal imaginations of God—Unworthy addresses to God—Defacing the image of God in the soul—Enmity to the wisdom of God—Slighting his laws—Defacing the workmanship of God—Censuring his ways—Prescribing to God—Enmity against the sufficiency of God—Against the omniscience—Against the mercy of God—Against the justice of God—Against the truth of God—Threatenings and promises—Against the providence of God—Against sovereign pleasure.

II. **ENMITY** to the holiness of God.

This hating his holiness is a virtual depriving him of his being ; for if he did not infinitely hate evil, he would not be infinitely good, and consequently would not be God. God can never endure sin, no not to *look upon it* ; and to cherish that, which is so contrary to his purity, is a denial of his holiness. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, thou canst not look on iniquity, Hab. 1. 13.*

First, in *sinning under a pretence of religion.* Many resolve upon some ways of wickedness, and

then raze the scripture to find out at least excuses and evasions for it, if not a justification for their crimes. This was the devil's method to Christ, to bring scripture for self-murder. Saul resolves not to obey God, but would preserve the spoils of the Amalekites, and then thinks to qualify all with offering a few sacrifices; as though God's holiness would not bate sin, that had a religious pretext. Many that have wrung estates from the tears of widows and heart blood of orphans, think to wipe off all their oppression by some charitable legacies at their death. It is abominable to make charity, the transcript of God's goodness, a covert for sin; and religion which is to bring us near to God, to patronize our tyranny. When men will speak wickedly and talk *deceitfully for God Job 13. 7.* i. e. will sin for God's glory, and make the honour of his service a stalking-horse to the affront of his holiness.

2. In charging sin upon God. Every man naturally is willing to find the inducement to sin in another, rather than in himself. This is an act of hatred, to bespot the reputation of others by imputing our crimes to them, and accusing them as the authors or occasions of our transgressions. It is an act of fear, which is the companion of hatred; if men can make God a sinner against his own law, they blemish his holiness, they think they are secure from the punishment they did dread. * For we fear not man, who is faulty as well as ourselves. When men have done all that they can to blot out a sense of a Deity, and see they cannot do it, they will raze out the reverence of it. And if we find a way to lay our sins at God's door, when he chargeth them upon us, we think then to escape the rigour of his justice, and that he cannot be unrighteous to punish us for those crimes which he is guilty of as well as ourselves. But it is a foolish consideration; for if we can fancy an unholy God, we

* Manton on James, p. 92.

have no reason to think him a righteous God. That you may see that this very thing which looks so horrible, runs in our blood, take notice of the two first discourses God had with man after his fall, and they will both discover this.

When God examines Adam about his transgression, he excuses himself by laying it upon God; *The woman whom thou gavest me to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat, Gen. 3. 12.* Hadst thou not given me the woman, I had not been tempted; and had I not been tempted, I had not sinned; and this sin was committed presently after the woman was given me, as if thou hadst given me this woman to be my immediate tempter; and infused such a love in my heart to her, that it could not resist her allurements. For he seems by the speech to intimate, that God gave him the woman on purpose to draw him into sin. The next is Cain; some think Cain here lays the fault upon God; *Am I my brother's keeper? Gen. 4. 9;* as if he should have said, Art not thou the keeper and governor of the world, why didst not thou hinder me from killing my brother? David, a holy man, follows him in those steps, and charges a sin of his own contrivance upon the providence of God; when the news of Uriah's death was brought, he wipes his mouth, and saith, *the sword decours one as well as another.* He fastens that solely on the divine providence, which was his own wicked contrivance, *2 Sam. 11. 25.*

3. In *hating the image of God's holiness in others.* The more holy any man is, and the more active in the severest duties of religion, the more is he the object of the scoffs of others; and not only barked at by tippling drunkards on the ale bench, but by formal and grave judges on the seat of justice. David, though a king, whose example might have been powerful to have brought them to an outward pretended love to holiness, was spoke against by them that sat in the gate, and was the song of the drunkards, and

that when he wept, and chastised his soul with fasting, *Psal.* 69. 10, 11, 12.

Hence nothing is so burdensome as the presence of a sober religious person, because of that image of God's holiness shining in him, which strikes so full upon his soul, and sets his heart on work in checking and griping reflections. Now holiness being the glory of God, the peculiar title of the Deity, and from him derived upon the soul, he that mocks this in a person, derides God himself. He that hates the picture of a prince, hates the prince also, and much more were he in his power. He that hates the stream, hates the fountain; he that hates the beams, hates the sun. The holiness of a creature is but a beam from that infinite sun, a stream from that eternal fountain. If a mixed and imperfect holiness be more the subjects of thy scoffs, than a great deal of sin, surely thou wouldest more roundly scoff at God himself, should he appear in the unblemished and unspotted holiness of his nature, which infinitely shines in him: for thy hatred would be greater, because thy contrariety is so much more against the perfection of holiness, than where it is with a mixture. Where there is a hatred of the purity and perfection of any creature, there is a greater reflection upon God, who is the author of that purity.

4. In having *debasing notions* of the holy nature of God. We invert the creation contrary to God's order in it; God made man according to his own image, and we make God according to ours. We fashion God like ourselves, and fasten our own humours upon him, as the Lacedemonians were wont to dress their gods after the fashion of their cities, *Psal.* 40. 21. Though men are enemies to the holy majesty of God, yet they can please themselves well enough with him as represented by that idea their corrupt minds have framed of him. We cannot comprehend God; if we could, we should be infinite, not finite; and because we cannot comprehend him,

we set up in our fancies strange images of him, and so ungod God in our heart and affections.

1. This is an *higher affront to God than we imagine.* *Vulgi opinionis diis applicare prophanum est.* Epicurus. *De Deo male sentire quam deum esse negare pejus duco.* It is worse to degrade the nature of God in our conceits, and to make him a vicious God, than if in our thoughts we did quite discard any such being; for it is not so gross a crime to deny his being, as to fancy him otherwise than he is; such imaginations strip him of his perfections, and reduce him to a mere vanity. Plutarch saith, he should account himself less wronged by that man that should deny there ever was such a man as Plutarch, than that he should affirm, there was such a man indeed, but he was a choleric clown, a decrepid fellow, a debauched man, and an ignorant fool. This was the general censure of the heathen, that superstition was far worse than atheism, by how much the less evil it was to have no opinion of God, than such as is vile, wicked, derogatory to the pure and holy nature of the divine majesty.

2. *Carnal imaginations* of God, as well as corporeal images, are idolatry. It is a question, which idolatry is the greatest, to worship an image of wood or stone, or to entertain monstrous imaginations of God. It provokes a man when we liken him to some inferior creature, and call him a dog, or toad; it is not such an affront to a man to call him a creature of such a low rank and classis, as to square and model the perfections of the great God, according to our limited capacities. We do worse than the heathen (of whom the apostle proclaimed) did in their images, they likened the glory of God to such creatures as were of the lowest form in the creation. We liken God not to corruptible man, but to corrupt man, and worse yet, to the very corruptions of men, and worship a God dressed up according to our own foolish fancies; *And changed the glory of the incor-*

ruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, Rom. 1. 23. If all those several conceptions and ideas men have of God, were uncased, and discovered, what a monstrous thing would God appear to be, according to the modes the imaginative faculty frames them in?

5. In our *unworthy and perfunctory addresses to God.* When men come into the presence of God with lusts reeking in their hearts, and leap from sin to duty. God is so holy, that were our services the most refined, as pure as those of the angels, yet we could not serve him suitably to his holy nature, *Josh. 24. 19*; therefore we deny this holiness, when we come before him without due preparation as if God did not deserve the purest thoughts in our applications to him; or as if a blemished and polluted sacrifice were suitable enough to his nature. When we excite not those elevated frames of spirit, which are due to his greatness, and fulness, and think to put him off with cheap and spotted services, we slight the holy majesty of God, and are guilty of a higher presumption than is fitting for us in our access to an earthly prince.

We worship him not according to the excellent holiness of his nature, when we have foolish imaginations creep upon us in the very act of duty, which makes our services erroneous, and misguided. When we bring our worldly, carnal, debauched thoughts into his presence, worse than the dogs or slaves we would blush to be attended by in our visits of a great man. When our hearts are turned from God in any duty; while we are speaking with our Creator, to be in our hearts conversing with our sordid sensualities; it is as if we should be raking in a dung-hill when we are talking with a king. We do here but defame his holiness while we pretend to honour it; and profane his name, while we are praying *hallowed be thy name.* It would argue more modesty, though less sincerity, to say to

our lusts, as Abraham to his servant, *Tarry here till I go to sacrifice.*

6. In *defacing the image of God in our own souls*, God in the first draught of man, conformed him to his own image; because we find that in regeneration this image is renewed; *The new man, which after God, $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$ Θεὸν is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4. 24.* He did not take angels for his pattern in his first polishing the soul, but himself. In defacing this image, therefore, we cast dirt upon the holiness of God, which was his pattern in the framing of us; and rather chuse to be conformed to Satan, who is God's great enemy, and to have God's image wiped out of us, and the devil's pictured in us. Therefore natural men, that are guilty of gross sins, are called devils, *John 6. 70.* It is spoken of Judas; Christ gave it to Peter too, *Matt. 16. 23.* And if he give this title to one of the worst of men, and one of the best of men, it will be no wrong to give it to all men. Men wallow in sin, which is directly contrary to that illustrious image which God did imprint upon them; and perform those actions which are odious to God and his righteousness, and suitable to their corruption. Men *glory* in that which is *their shame*; and account that their ornament which is the greatest blot upon their nature, which if it were upon God would make him cease to be God.

3. Enmity to the *wisdom* of God. Presumptuous sins are called a reproach of God; *The soul that doth aught presumptuously, the same reproaches the Lord, Num. 15. 30.* All reproaches are either for natural, moral, or intellectual defects; all reproaches of God must be either for wickedness or weakness; if for wickedness, his holiness is denied; if for weakness, his wisdom is blemished.

1. In *slighting the laws* of God. Since God hath no defect in his understanding, his will must be the best and wisest, and therefore his laws highly rational, as being the orders of the wisest agent. As God's

understanding apprehends all things in their true reason, so his will enjoins nothing but what is highly good, and makes for the happiness of his creature; the true means of whose happiness he understands better than men or angels can do. All laws, though they are enforced by sovereignty, yet they are, or ought to be, in the composing of them, founded upon reason, are indeed applications of the law of nature upon this or that particular emergency. The laws of God then, who is *summa ratio*, are purely founded upon the truest reason, though every one of them may not be so clear to us; therefore they that make alteration in his precepts, either dogmatically or practically, controul his wisdom, and charge him with folly. When men will observe one part of his law, and not another; pick and chuse where they please, hence it is that sinners are called fools in scripture. It is certainly inexcusable folly, to contradict undeniable and infallible wisdom. If infinite prudence hath framed the law, why is not every part of it observed? If it were not made with the best wisdom, why is any thing of it observed?

He that receives the promises of God, and the testimony of Christ, *sets to his seal that God is true*, *John 3. 33*. It must thence undeniably follow, that he that refuseth obedience to his law, sets to his seal that God is foolish. Men live as though the commands of God were made in sport, not by counsel. If God took counsel in the making man, there is as much need of counsel in the right ordering him.

If the defacing his image by any sin is a defaming his wisdom in the creation, the breaking his law is a disgracing his wisdom in the administration. Were they not rational, God would not enjoin them; and if they are rational, we are enemies to infinite wisdom by not complying with them.

2. In *defacing the wise workmanship* of God, Every sin is a defacing our own souls: which as they are the prime creatures in the sensible world, had

greater characters of God's wisdom in the fabric of them. But this image of God is ruined and broken by sin. Though the spoiling of it be a scorn of his holiness, it is also an affront to his wisdom; because though his power was the cause of the production of so fair a being, yet his wisdom was the guide of his power, as well as his holiness the exemplar whereby he wrought it. If a man had a curious clock or watch, which had cost him many years pains, and the strength of his skill to frame; for a man after he had seen and considered it, to cut, slash, and break all, would argue a contempt of the workman's skill. God hath shown infinite art in the creation of man, but sin unbeautifies man, and bereaves him of his excellency.

3. *Censuring his ways.* What is our impatience at any passages of his providence, but a censuring his dealing with us as unjust or unwise; as if we would presume to instruct him better in the management of human affairs. It is to take upon us to be God's judges, to cite him to our tribunal to give an account of his administration of things. It is a reviling him because he doth manage things according to his own will, and not according to ours. It is a striving with God, and a summoning him to the bar of our reason; *Woe to him that strives with his Maker: Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, what makest thou? Isa. 45. 9 10.* To quarrel with him, and examine him about his works, why he made them thus, and not thus; It is a reproaching of God, *a contending with him, to instruct him. Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproves God, let him answer it, Job 40. 2.* A reproof argues a superiority in authority, knowledge, or goodness. It is a playing Absalom's game; Oh that I were king in Israel, I would do this and that man justice: so that it is a virtual wishing, Oh that I were king of the world, the governor of all creatures, things should be disposed more wisely, and more justly.

4. *Prescribing rules and methods to God.* We presume to be God's tutors, and would sway him according to the dictates of our wisdom; when we would have a mercy in this method which God designs to convey through another channel; when we would have him take his measures from our humours; this was the ground of Jonah's argument with God, *It displeased Jonah exceedingly; and he was very angry, Jonah 4. 1.* When we make vows to flatter God into a compliance with our design; when we pray imperiously for any thing without a due submission to God's will; as if we were his counsellors, and he were bound to follow our humours. Thus would the most glorious of virgins and mothers prescribe to Christ a rule for his miraculous action, *Luke 2. 48.* His mother said unto him, *Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us, John 2. 3. 4.* So the Jews who nailed him to the cross, offered to believe on him, if he would submit to their terms, and gratify their curiosity in descending from the cross they had fixed him to. Are not most men Jews in this, to prescribe terms to God, upon the grant whereof he shall have our service of believing in him. As if a child should appoint rules for his father, or an insane patient to his physician; would it not be an injury to their prudence and skill? This presumptuous humour is a hellish offence. Abraham asserts the way of God's appointment by Moses and the prophets, to be the best way for bringing men to repentance and salvation, but the rich man prefers his own judgment, and would have him send one from the dead to preach to them. Abraham saith unto him, *They have Moses and the prophets;* and he said, *Nay, father Abraham, Luke 16. 27, 28, 29, 30.* We deal often thus with God, as though we were his counsellors, not his subjects.

4. *Enmity to the sufficiency of God.* The preferring any sin before God, is a denial of the fulness of content to be had in the enjoyment of God; as though

God were inferior to a base lust, and that a vile pleasure had a better relish than the communications of God to the soul. For when God describes what pleasure and peace there is in his ways, what fulness of joy in his presence; what is the refusal of it but equivalent to this language of the sinner; no, I will believe no such thing; there is more happiness to be had in sin than in God? and so he values a vapour, an empty bubble, more than infinite fulness. The greater is the scorn of God's sufficiency, by how much the more ignoble, brutish, and contemptible the pleasure is we prefer before him.

1. In secret thoughts of *meriting* by any religious act. As though God could be indebted to us, and obliged by us. As though our devotions could bring a blessedness to God more than he essentially hath; when indeed *our goodness extends not to him, Psal. 16.*

2. Our services of God are rather services to ourselves, and bring a happiness to us, not to God. This secret opinion of merit (though disputed against the Papists, yet) is natural to man; and this secret self-pleasing, when we have performed any duty, and upon that account expect some fair compensation from God, as having been profitable to him. God intimates this; *The wild beasts of the field are mine; if I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof, Psal. 50. 11, 12.* He implies, that they wronged his infinite fulness, by thinking that he stood in need of their sacrifices and services, and that he was beholden to them for their adoration of him. All merit implies a moral or natural insufficiency in the person of whom we merit, and our doing something for him, which he could not, or at least so well do for himself. It is implied in our murmuring at God's dealing with us in a course of cross providences, wherein men think they have deserved better at the hands of God by their service, than to be so cast aside and degraded by him. In our prosperity we are apt to have secret thoughts that

our enjoyments were the debts God owed us, rather than gifts freely bestowed upon us. Hence it is that men are more unwilling to part with their righteousness than with their sins, and are apt to challenge salvation as a due, rather than beg it as an act of grace.

2. *Trying all ways of helping ourselves, before we come to God.* Having hopes to find that in creatures, which is only to be found in an all-sufficient God. When we rather seek an alms from the world than God, as though there were some hidden excellency in the world, which overtopped the excellency of God. When we would rather drink of cisterns than of the fountain; as though the waters in the cistern were fresher and sweeter than those in the spring. Hence it is that upon any emergency we set our own reason on work, before we crave the assistance of God's power; and scarce seek him, till we have modelled the whole contrivance in our own brains, and resolved upon the methods of performance; as though there were not a fulness of reason in God to guide us in our resolves, as well as power to breathe success upon them, *After vows to make enquiry, Prov. 20. 25,* after resolutions to beg direction in our business. Sometimes men seek out unlawful ways for their delivery, as though there were more sufficiency of help in sin; than in God. Did we believe, and love the sufficiency of God, that is able to supply our wants, we should not upon every strait be turned from him, and beg help at the door of creatures.

3. In our *apostacies from God.* When after fair pretences and devout applications, we grow cold, and thrust him from us, it implies, that God hath not that fulness in him which we expected. Backsliding testifies that there is not that sweetness and satisfactoriness in God, which we expected, upon our first approach to him. All apostacy is a denial of God; for it denies him either to be a fountain of all good, or else that he is not true to his promises, but deceives us in our just expectations of good from him. It

either speaks him evil, or deceitful; it is a greater affront to deny him after an experience of his sweetness, and assistance, than to deny him before any dealing with him, or trial of him. Now though all apostacy begins in a neglect, yet it quickly ripens into a hatred.

4. *In joining something with God to make up our happiness.* Though men are willing to have the enjoyment of God, yet they are not content with him alone, but would have something else to eke him out; as though God, who accounts the enjoyment of himself the greatest blessedness, had not also in himself a sufficient blessedness for his creatures, without the additions of any thing else. The young man in the gospel went away sorrowful, because he could not enjoy God and the world both together, *Matt. 19. 21, 22.* If we would light up candles in a clear day, when the sun shines in its full brightness, what do we imply, but that the sun has not light enough in itself to make it day? And when we labour for other things with as much strength and eagerness, as we labour for the enjoyment of God, what is it, but to deny that there is enough in him without the concurrence of some other good?

5. *Against the omniscience of God.* Men hate God's omniscience, and could willingly have him stripped of this eminency. For men naturally love not those that dive into their purposes, and canvass their thoughts; so neither can men love this attribute of God, whereby he enters into the secret closets of their heart, and takes an exact measure of every wicked and subtle contrivance. The first speech that Adam spake in paradise after his fall, infringed God's omniscience, *I heard thy voice in the garden, and I hid myself.* *Gen. 3. 10.* As if the trees could shelter him from that eye that saw the minutest part of the whole earth. The next speech recorded of the second man, Cain, is to the same purpose; when God put the question to him, *Where is thy brother? I know not,* *Gen. 4. 9;* thinking thereby to delude

God's omniscieny. He that practically denies God's omniscieny, denies his godhead: for a man may as well deny that there is a sun, as deny that it shines, and disperseth its light and influence into every corner.*

This appears,

1. When we commit sin upon the ground of *secrecy*. If all hearts, surely then all places are open to God's eye; no private bench for a drunkard, or secret stew for an adulterer, but is obvious to him. Common modesty before man, is not practised before God: men are ashamed to have their actions seen by man's eye, but not by God's. *Maxima debetur pueris reverentia*. Filthy actions cannot endure the presence of a child's eye, much less of man's. Shall the presence of a child have more power over us than the presence of God; and men's observing, more than God's censuring eye? Is not this a denial of him, when the eye of God is of less force to restrain thee, than the eye of man; as if men only could see, and God were blind? All the sin thou committest before the eye of the holiest man in the world, cannot make him hate thee so much as God hates thee; because his holiness is infinitely short of God's holiness, and consequently his hatred is infinitely short of God's.

It is an aggravation of a man's sin, to be committed in the presence of God, *Gen.* 10. 9. A mighty hunter before the Lord. As it was of Haman's offence, when he lay upon Esther's bed, that he would force the queen *before the king's face*. It seems to be David's conceit in his sin, that God would not see him, both by Nathan's charge, Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, *to do evil in his sight?* *2 Sam.* 2. 19, and by his own confession, *This evil have I done in thy sight,* *Psal.* 51.

4. Every penitent takes notice of the wrong he doth to God's all-seeing eye. It is a high provocation for

* See more of this in the discourse of God's omnipresence.

a servant to do ill when his master's eye is upon him, or a thief to cut a purse before the Judge's face. God observes all wickedness ; wickedness under lock and key. If he registers all thy members in his book, he will also register the sins of those members, what use thou puttest them to, whether to his service, or the devil's drudgery ; whether thy eye rove about in wanton glances, or thy tongue be let loose in profane language, or thy ear open to ungodly discourse, or thy feet more swift to carry thee to an alehouse than a sermon.

It was once a check a young man gave to a harlot, who had enticed him, and carried him from one room to another for secrecy ; Oh, saith he, can none see us here ? Can we be hid from God's eye ? Yet sinners in their practice make their boast, as they, in express words, *Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he sees not, and he walks in the circuit of heaven : Job. 22. 14.* As though God's eye could not pierce the thick clouds ; as though his cares were confined only to celestial things, and earth were too low an orb for his eyes to roll about. If we think a word in the presence of a grave religious man may disgrace us, we are troubled in our minds ; but we regard not an injury done to God. We are more cast down, if a foolish action of ours comes to the knowledge of men, than to the knowledge of God.

2. When men give liberty to *inward sins*. God often sets forth himself by that expression, that he *trieth the heart, and searcheth the reins*. The heart hath many valves and ventricles, but God searches all the valves, which cannot be espied and discerned but by a curious eye. God sees all the contrivances of it. The reins are partly hid, most inward, surrounded with fat. The most inward thoughts cannot be hid from God's piercing eye, for all is open before him, like dissected sacrifices when the bowels are ripped up, and all the inwards discovered. God is more within the soul of a creature, than any one hidden thought

can be, and knows it before the heart that mints it has a full discovery of it. What do the actings of sin in our fancies import, but as though God's eye could not pierce into the remoteness and darkness of our minds?

Manasseh is blamed for setting up strange altars in the house of God; much more may we for setting up strange imaginations in the heart, which should belong to God. This is to deny God's judicial prerogative; this is the attribute which speaks him fit to be a judge, and yet men can possess their hearts with this, that he is defective in this attribute, and so make him incapable of judging the world. Hypocrisy is a plain denial of this omniscience. When men have a religious lip, and a black soul; an outside swept and garnished, and a legion of devils garrisoned within. This derogates from God, as though his eye were as easily deceived as men's, and an outward appearance limited God's observation. Are we not more slight in the performance of private devotions before God, than we are in our attendances in public in the sight of men.

3. When men give way to *diversions in a duty*, it is a denial of God's omniscience. Love is the cause of fixedness. The angels have a pure affection to God, and therefore they have an uninterrupted attention in his presence. If thou thinkest God does not mind thee, why dost thou pray at all? If thou thinkest he does mind thee, why dost thou not pray more fervently, fixedly, and hear more attentively? This attention consists in the frame of the soul; for bodily exercise is required for our sakes, not for God's. Gesture and speech are to quicken our affections. Christ has given us a short pattern of prayer, and can our hearts be steady upon God in the repetition of it? Duties are visits we pay to God; would it not be an affront, if when we were to visit a prince, we should send a noisome rotten carcase in our stead? Do we not deal so with God, when we come without

our heart, as though God were ignorant, and could be put off with any thing, the worst in our flocks, as well as the best.

It wrongs the majesty of God's presence, that when he speaks to us, we will not give him so much respect as to regard him; and when we speak to him, we do not regard ourselves. What a vain thing is it, to be speaking to a scullion when the king is in presence? Every careless diversion to a vain object, is a denial of God's presence in the place. It is a wrong to God's excellency, that when we come to God for what we count sweet and desirable, we presently turn our backs, as though our address were an act of imprudence and folly; as much as to say, there is no sweetness in him, no beauty that we should desire him.

6. Enmity to the *mercy* of God. God is not wronged more in any attribute by devils and men, than in his mercy. Man would deprive God of the honour of his own mercy; of the objects of mercy; when God's mercy to others comes in competition with his self-love and credit. Jonah's pride would null the goodness of God. With what an unreasonable passion doth he fly in the face of God, for relieving the humbled Ninevites? He would rather have had his own credit preserved in the destruction of them according to his prediction, than God's tenderness magnified in their preservation. Some fancy a God made up altogether of mercy, a childish mercy; as if his mercy had nothing else to do, but to wrong all his other perfections; to make him belie his truth, extinguish his justice, discard his wisdom, and enslave his power.

This appears, 1. In the *severe and jealous thoughts* men have of God. Men are apt to charge God with tyranny, whereby they strip him of the riches of his glorious mercy. The devil's design at first was to belie God to man, that he might have hard and contracted thoughts of God, to think him strait-handed

towards his creature. Therefore he is called a *liar from the beginning*, in urging man to misbelieve his Creator to be an unjust, hard, and cruel master, and that envied him comforts necessary for him; which frightful thoughts of the deity have haunted man ever since. If man in creation was so ready to entertain jealousies of God, man in corruption, with the load of guilt upon him, is much more prone.

The heathens (by the devil's instigation), as the Indians, have their notions, that mercy flows not naturally from God, but must be wrested by a multitude of services; that he will do nothing without the bribe of a sacrifice; which they offer, lest he should hurt them. As if God only created men, to make sport with their misery: as if God had no other design in the creation, than to load his creatures with chains, and govern that world by tyranny, which he made by an efflux of powerful goodness. The worship of many men is founded upon this conceit, whereby they are frightened into some actions of adoration, not sweetly drawn. This representation of God doth debase the soul; and fills it with that tyrannical passion of fear, which is always accompanied with hatred; for we hate what we fear. Thus the devil accuses God to troubled consciences, persuading them that he has no mercy for them, that so he may drive them to despair. This he attained in Cain, who cries in despair, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*; i. e. my sin is greater than can be pardoned, *Gen. 4. 13.*

When any soul is like to be snatched out of Satan's hands, he makes it interpret those acts wherein God means favour, to be acts of enmity. So that the main work God has to do after conviction, is to persuade the soul to have good thoughts of him. Hence arises that unwillingness in the soul to come to God. How can we approach to him, of whom we have such narrow thoughts, and judge of according to our own revengeful humours? How can we do otherwise but

hate him, when we represent him as one easily angry, hardly appeased, of a cruel nature ; a Minos, a Rhadamanthus, or Phalargy, rather than an infinite mirror of sweetness and love. If we do not think him so, why do we stand off from him? Hence arises our wrong constructions of providence, and sinister interpretations of God's acts; when we attribute to God such ends as have no other foundation but our own foolish fancy. Thus Manoah interprets the angel's coming, which was an act of God's kindness to him, to be an ill-meant providence, *Judg.* 13. 22. Now as it is the quality of love to think no evil, so it is the property of hatred to think all evil. And as when a man hates sin, he cannot endure any varnish of an excuse to be put upon it, and cannot speak or think too bad of it; so when a man hates God, he cannot endure to have a good gloss put upon his actions.

2. *Slighting his mercy, and robbing him of the end of it.* The wilful breaking of a prince's laws, upon the observance whereof great rewards are promised, is not only a despising his sovereignty, but a slighting his goodness, in the rewards proffered to the observers. Rebels that stand it out against proclamations of pardon, do what in them lies to deprive the prince of any objects to show his clemency on. So obstinate sinners against mercy would, as far as they are able, deprive God of any subject to magnify his mercy on, especially when they do not only stand it out against so gracious proffers of God, but draw in others to take up arms against him; every sin in this respect is a stealing the glory of this attribute from God, in denying him that tribute of obedience which is due to him for it. Often this enmity rises higher; and whereas men should fear him, because he is ready to forgive, *Psal.* 130. 4, they rather slight him, and presume to sin because he hath mercy to pardon. And so make that which should cherish their obedience, to be a spur to their rebellion; and encourage their future offences by that goodness which should

excite a fear and holy awe of him in their souls. Because God is gracious, men will be more vicious; hence they are said to *despise his goodness*, *Rom. 2. 4.* And that patience which should teach them repentance, inflames their hatred, and in this humour, they turn grace itself into wantonness, *Eccl. 8. 11.*

7. Enmity to the *justice* of God. When men wish there were no God, they wish this at least, that God were unclothed of those perfections which are averse and dreadful to their guilty consciences; scarce a man but hath flattering fancies, that God is not so terrible as he is represented.

This appears, 1. In not fearing it, but *running under the lash of it*. Sin is an act of rebellion, and rebels fear not the justice, or else hope to overcome the power of their superior. Would not men be afraid to spit in the face of heaven, did they really believe there was a God who was just and righteous, and would not let any sin go unpunished? The prophet speaks of some that had *wearied God* with their sins, and *made him serve* with their iniquities, *Isa. 43. 24.* as if God were bound to endure their evil carriage against him with patience, and never to unsheath the sword of his justice. How often are men upon this account said to have a rocky heart, and iron sinews, that will neither be broken, nor bent? Are not the Belshazzars of the world merry, though the hand writing be upon the wall against them. Thus men commit sin with *greediness*, and are *past feeling*, *Eph. 4. 19.* daring the justice of God, and without any sense of revenge due to sin; and say, to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. Nay, I dare aver, that if a man who had been scorched in hell, should again enjoy his wonted pleasures, and have all the while a fresh remembrance of his late torments, were not his will changed by a powerful grace, he would stand it out as stiffly against God as ever, notwithstanding those terrible marks of wrath, and be without a holy fear of that justice which he had felt.

2. Sinning under the *strokes* of justice. Men will not turn to God that smites them, though they have hypocritical howlings upon their beds under God's stroke, *Hos.* 7. 13, 14: & *Isa.* 9. 13. They will roar under the stroke, but not submit to the striker. It is the witch of Endor, or the God of Ekron shall have their addresses, and not the God of heaven.

3. In hoping easily to *evade it*. There are sometimes secret thoughts, that a man is able to maintain himself against all the force God can use; which the apostle implies, *Are we stronger than he?* *1 Cor.* 10. 22. Do we think to try it out at arms-length with God? Sin implies a mastering God's all-powerful justice. Sometimes men will argue for impiety from their present impunity; and because *he keeps silence*, think that he will not publish a condemning sentence, *Psal.* 50. 21. And because God forbears, think that he has forgotten to punish, *God hath forgotten*, *Psal.* 10. 11. Sometimes we fancy God like to ourselves, mutable with every wind, as soon appeased as angry; either unable to resist the force of our prayers, or easily enticed by our good words, and praises of him, as though he were to be flattered out of his just anger, his holy and righteous nature, *They flattered him with their mouth*, *Psal.* 78. 36. As if he needed our trifles, and rattles, as children do, to appease them; or might be wrought upon as the poor Indians, to give the gold of heaven for a few beads.

They fancy him a god of wax, whom they can bend at their pleasure; either so weak that he cannot; or of so soft a disposition, that he will not be revenged of sin, and that a few sighs will blow away a storm of wrath. Hence men invent ways of pleasing God after they have offended him; and think to expiate the sin of their soul, by the offering their substance, or presenting some melancholy devotions, or inflicting some self chastisements. As if God were to be

bribed by the blood of a lamb, or goat, or by some superstitious and formal services, to change his provoked justice into an easy clemency.

8. Enmity to the *truth* of God. Most men live upon trust for their knowledge, and know far more by the relation, and upon the credit of others, than upon certain demonstrations ; as that there are such places as China, Peru, Mexico. And why are men so backward in believing God, speaking in his word? It is clear hereby, that men have not so great enmity against one another, as they have against God.

This appears, 1. In not believing his *threatenings*. Men believe not either the matter, or sudden execution of them. Our faith is more operative upon reports from men, than revelations from God. Men will believe stories of danger, so as to avoid the places wherein they may be liable to it. Yet though God tells them what the issue of sin will be, how certainly it will destroy them, they will walk on in their own way. Men look upon hell as a painted fire, upon the threatenings as scarecrows, without a sting, and are not so much affected with them, as at the reading of a tragedy. Would men be so stupid, as not to stir out of the fire, if they did really believe God were true? They are apt to fear others that threaten inferior punishments, and not to fear God who threatens everlasting woe ; but think to find mercy in the way of sin, though God assures them to the contrary. How soon did the Israelites lose the sense of the thunder, which terrified them when the law was given? Like those sponges that thunder will pass through. Such are secure persons through whom the thunder of God's threatenings will pass, without doing any hurt. A contrite heart trembles at the word, *Isa.* 66. 2, because he acknowledges it to be true ; whereas a proud heart is like an unmoved rock, that is not daunted at God's threatenings, as imagining them to be false. If a man at first believes them, yet if God delays the execution of them, he thinks they were in jest with him,

and takes delays for denials; *My master delays his coming, Luke 12. 45.* This temper is called a belying of God; *It is not he, this evil shall not come upon us, Jer. 5. 12.* 2. His *promises.* Man is more prone to believe God's promises, than threatenings, because men are naturally credulous of that which makes for their interest; therefore God made the Jews to say amen to the curses, *Deut. 27. 26.* Not to the blessings, *Deut. 28,* because they were ready to slight threatenings, and snatch at promises. But yet even his words of grace are not credited by men; hence it is, that they are not allured by his gracious proffers, which would work upon men, if they really believed that God intended as he spake. All the unbelief in the world gives God the lie; the greatest indignity among the sons of men; *He that believes not God, hath made him a liar, 1 John 5. 10.* We believe the promises of a man, that is a lie, as the psalmist speaks, and has deceived us; and rely upon a vain creature that fails, rather than upon the true and living God. Like the foolish Indians, part with the gold of God's promises for glass and ribbons, brittle and gaudy things. Present things do more affect us, than future. It was the present world Demas loved more than a future crown, *2 Tim. 4. 10.* Sensible trifles are esteemed more valuable than invisible and eternal excellency. Men look upon heaven as a poet's elysium, a dream and fancy, and the promise of Christ's coming to be the greatest falsehood; *Where is the promise of his coming, 2 Pet. 3. 4.* It is an undervaluing God's veracity, to be led by sense, a brutish principle; rather than by God, who is truth itself. Our following the dictates of natural reason against revelation, is not so derogatory, as the making sense our guide.

9. Enmity to his *providence.* By denying his truth, we deny his providence; for as the crediting the truth of one another, keeps up commerce in the world; so the veracity of God on his part, and the

sincerity of man, keep up an intercourse between God and the world. Some have thought God a sleepy God, as though he never cared how the world moved, so he might rest, *Zeph.* 1. 12. Some thought it below God's majesty to mind sublunary things, as though it were more unworthy for God to govern them, than it was to create them. This appears,

1. In ascribing his works to *second* causes. When we look upon second causes as the authors of benefits we enjoy, and attribute to them what is due to God, and ascribe them to blind chance, or the dexterity of our own wit, and thither return our thank-offerings; *They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense to their drag, Heb.* 1. 16. Deifying the creature, the instrument, without any, or a formal regard to the chief actor. In chastisements we look not upon sin as the meritorious, or God as the efficient cause. Thus Balaam spurred on his ass, and never considered the angel that stood in the way. Many regard instruments, and never consider God, who does all the evil in the city; and thus rob God both of the honour of his mercies, and the obedience required both by him and his chastisements.

2. In the *offence* we take, and the *resistance* we make to his providences if they *cross our will*. Sometimes men will charge the providence of God in times of affliction, that he is unjust towards them, and inflicts punishments when they deserve rewards; therefore the spirit of God gives it as commendation of Job, that *in all this*, i. e. in those many afflictions, he did *not charge God foolishly, Job* 1. 22, a praise scarce to be given to any man in the world. We are apt to murmur, as if God were bound to take care of us, and act all for our good, and neglect the whole world besides; or as though it were fitter for him to govern according to our foolish wills, than his own wise and righteous will. Sometimes men will oppose the designs of his providence. The Gadarenes are so startled at the loss of their swine, that with a joint con-

sent they desire Christ to depart from their coasts, having no mind to entertain his person or his doctrine, when they should rather have been moved by his miraculous power and his preaching, to have enquired into the gospel which he preached. When the carnal interest of men's grandeur is struck at, they will quarrel at the powerful ways of God, *Acts 5. 16, 17.* The high priests and sadducees were filled with indignation at the apostle's miracles, which had reason enough to convince them, had they not had too much malice to withstand them. Instead of submitting to the rod, we rage against God, when he is correcting us; and, like chaff, fly in the face of him that fans us. Not like children, submitting to a father, but like rebels, denying his superiority over us.

3. In our *misinterpretations* of providence. Shimei misinterpreted the providence of God, when David fled from Jerusalem upon his son Absalom's rebellion. Oh, saith he, now God will revenge the house of Saul, *2 Sam. 16. 7, 8.* We will put interpretations upon God's acts according to our fancies, humours, and wishes; therefore the Spirit of God takes particular notice, that Shimei was of the house of Saul, and therefore according to his own humour accounted this a punishment, for his outing the house of Saul from the government. This is a high usurpation of God's prerogative, who is the best interpreter of his own acts, as well as his laws.

10. Enmity to his *content* and *pleasure*.

1. In his *nature*. Such an enmity there is in sin, that it strives to make a confusion in God himself, a war in his very nature: for sin put God to his infinite wisdom to satisfy all the perfections of his nature. If he spared the sinner, how could he be just? If he destroyed him, how could he be merciful? What wit of men or angels could contrive a way to compose those attributes, and make truth and righteousness, mercy and justice, to kiss each other, and still those jars which sin endeavoured to make between them?

If justice should have its full due, what would become of the creature? If mercy should only act its part, what would become of the righteousness of God's nature? If the creature should be damned by the severity of justice, mercy might sit weeping for want of objects, unless new ones were created. If mercy should have its contentment in the impunity of the sinner, righteousness and truth might bewail the want of a due satisfaction. The heart of mercy would be broken if sin were punished; and the cry of justice would be perpetual, unless the sinner fell under his own demerits. That surely is the greatest enemy, that endeavours to set division in a man's own family and nature.

2. In his *works*. Men endeavour to disappoint God of his glory, the end of his creation, and the most valuable jewel he reserves for his own use, and will not impart to another. God created all things for himself, and man by turning them to another use. evidences, that he would not let God have the pleasure of his own works, or the rent due to him for them. Sin made him repent that ever he put his hand to the framing that world, which after the creation he had pronounced good, *Gen. 6. 6, 7*; and made God be grieved at his own creatures, which with so much wisdom he made, and so much delight acquiesced in. God requires no more of man for all his benefits, but a service, and they deny him this, and endeavour to make him weary of his life, as if we studied how we could most vex and disquiet him. Thou hast *fretted me in all those things, Ezek. 16. 43.*

God created the world to have a service from his rational creatures, and yet their services naturally, as well as their sins, are a trouble to him, and tire him, that he is ready to shake the world in pieces. *Your appointed feasts, my soul hateth, I am weary to bear them, they are a trouble to me, Isa. 1. 14*; so that he can have no ease but in the acts of vengeance. *Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of mine*

enemies, ver. 24. God created the world, not for any need he had of it, but to communicate his own goodness, and made man as a choice vessel to receive it; but man shrinks his soul, that goodness cannot enter upon him, and so endeavours to frustrate God of this end. Can there be a greater contempt, than to deny God the satisfaction of his own works?

Now to sum up all that has been said. Suppose, if it were possible, that there were another God to judge, or an indifferent person to judge between God and men, of this world, and had a copy of all the laws and promises, records of all God's dealings, would he not judge by the practices of men, that God was some cruel Pharaoh, that notwithstanding all his fair words and promises, minded nothing but the destruction of his creature; and that man had some high provocations from God, to act so against the laws of goodness, and proposals of eminent rewards? That God had no excellency to make him desirable, but that he were the most despicable, contemptible, unworthy being in the whole world. All the actions and practices of men testify thus much, that he is a weak, impure, cruel, false, empty, shallow, inconsiderable being, and one that hath no authority over him; a pattern not fit to be imitated, one that hath been injurious to him, &c. An indifferent person, that had no knowledge of God, viewing his laws, would have a high opinion of him; but again considering the practices of his creatures, he could not but think that some great provocation was offered by God to men; that he was full of dissimulation; he could not otherwise think that there should be so general a defection from him. But to declare this enmity further, it will be evident, by considering what enmity there is against all that comes from him; both the truths he reveals, and the duties he enjoins.

PART IV.

ENMITY AGAINST THE TRUTH, &c.

Reluctance to believe it—Opposition to it—Carnal men do not receive the truth for its own sake—Their unsettled affections—Their abuse of the truth—Their enmity to spiritual duties—Unwillingness to them—Careless attention to them—Weariness in them—Desertion of duty—Their enmity to Christ—And to his followers—Their unlikeness to God—As to nature—Ends—Their guilt—Their enmity roused by the opposition of providence to their carnal interests—Their love of sin—Injury done to God—Slavish fear of God—Pride—Love of the world.

First. **T**HE carnal mind is enmity against God in his truth. Hating instruction is a part of atheism; *Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee, Psa. 50. 17.* God complains in *Hos. 8. 12*, that the most excellent things were accounted as a strange thing. God had given them the great things of his law, and they esteemed them not.

1. In men's *unwillingness to believe* any divine truth; or to meditate upon it. Men shun the thoughts of what they do not love; if we will not let truth in, which is a message from heaven, it is a sign we care not for the person from whom it comes.

It is *hard* to believe moral or divine truths. Because

they are against the interests of our lusts, and would eject those principles which have got so firm footing in our minds and affections, and would bring them into such a reformed course, which our minds biased by such principles, do exceedingly hate: whereas natural or mathematical verities are readily credited, and kindly entertained, because they thwart not our principles, as the others do. The more divine and spiritual the object is, the more unwilling we are to close with it: and by how much the nearer any notion of truth is to God, and the more clearly representing him, the more averse are we from it. And if men are enemies to that truth which doth most clearly discover God, and his mind, and cannot endure the thoughts of it, much less can they endure the thoughts of God himself. They are loth to entertain any thing that may disquiet them. Christ describes this humour, as it was in Noah's time, and as it will be towards the end of the world, *Mat.* 24. 38, 39, they were eating and drinking, as though the world were their own, and loth to think of a deluge; and at the latter end men will as hardly believe the burning, as they did then the drowning of the world. The pharises derided the soundest doctrine, *Luke* 16. 14. They derided him, *subsannarunt*; ἐξευκτερίζον, they treated him with every mark of the lowest contempt, when he declaimed against their covetousness.

2. If the word lays hold upon a man, he endeavours to *shake it off* as a man would a serjeant, who comes to arrest him. Men *like not to retain God in their knowledge*, *Rom.* 1. 28. If any truth presses in upon them, they turn it away, as men do importunate beggars; We have nothing for you; do not trouble us, we have no alms to bestow upon you: and the reason is, because men having abortivated and deadened all those relics and natural infusions of God in their soul, any lively truth and apprehensions of him proves most unsavoury: as wine and strong waters, which have lost their natural spirit, be-

come most ungrateful and unpleasant to the stomach ; so those innate impressions of God which are so refreshing to a good man, they do what they can to shake off or taint them, by mingling with them their own corrupt notions ; and when they cannot, they are filled with an irreligious rancour against God. Men keep the truths that rise up in themselves for conviction and instruction, in unrighteousness, and quench the motions of the blessed Spirit, killing them in the womb. Have not men often had secret wishes, that the scripture had never mentioned some truths, or that they were blotted out of the Bible, because they face their consciences, damp their pleasures, and cool their boiling lusts, which else they would with eagerness and delight pursue ?

3. When men cannot shake off a truth, but it sticks fast in them, yet they have no *pleasure* in the consideration of it, which would be if there were a love to God : for men love to read over the letters which are sent by them to whom they have an affection, and stick them up, or peruse them afterwards at their leisure. And it was an unclean beast that did not chew the cud under the law ; so it is a corrupt heart that doth not chew truth by meditation. Hence a natural man is said not to know the things of God ; for while he is inclined to a sensual life, he can have no delight in spiritual things, for sensuality hinders the operations of his soul about the choicest objects. Natural men may indeed meditate on a truth, but they do not delight in it ; or if they do, it is only as it is knowledge : for we delight in nothing that we desire, but upon the same account that we desire it. Now natural men desire to know God, and some truths ; not out of a sense of his excellency, but from a natural thirst after knowledge ; so that they rejoice in the act, not in the object, not to quicken their affections, as idle boys strike fire ; not to kindle any thing, but please themselves with the sparks : whereas a gracious soul accounts not only his meditation, or

the operation of his soul about a thing to be sweet, but he hath a spiritual joy in the object of that meditation. Many have the knowledge of God, who have no delight in it; as owls and bats have eyes to perceive the light, but by reason of the weakness of their sight, have no delight in it to look cheerfully upon it; so neither can a man by his natural or acquired knowledge delight in God, or love to look upon him, because of his corruption.

2. In their *opposition* to it. This opposition is *external*. In the first dawning of the gospel, what opposition did the apostles meet with? What persecutions were raised against them? How did the carnal world, like dogs, bark at the shining of the moon? It is as natural for men to persecute the truth, which is against the grain, as it is for them to breathe. When Socrates upon natural principles did confute the heathen idolatry, and asserted the unity of God, the whole cry of Athens, a learned university, is against him; and because he opposed the public received religion, he must die, *Acts 13. 45*. *Contradicting* and *blaspheming* are put together; disputes against the word many times end in blasphemies.

Their opposition is *internal*. God's truths cast against a hard heart, are like balls thrown against a stone wall, which rebound the further from it; such a resistance there is in man, to beat back all the tenders of grace. Where the grace of God comes in any power, it accidentally stirs up sin in the heart; as when the sun shines upon a noisome dunghill, it becomes more noisome; not that the sun communicates any filthiness or pollution to the dunghill, but by accident in warming it, it makes the stench break forth. Sin, as a garrison in a city, is up in arms upon any alarm from its adversary. A word of God against the great Diana of a man's lust, sets the whole soul in an uproar: sin follows the steps of its father the devil, and endeavours to bruise the heel of truth, which would break the head of lust. Men

hate the truths of God, when they begin to search and tent their beloved corruptions, (so Ahab, 1 *Kings* 22. 8. *I hate him, for he doth not prophecy good concerning me, but evil, John* 3. 19, 20,) lest their deeds should be reprov'd. As apes are reported to break the glass, because they would not see their own deformity. The light of speculation may be pleasant, but the light of conviction is grievous; the light strikes too strongly upon their sore eyes, and makes them smart.

3. If men do entertain truth, it is *not for truth's sake, but for some other by-end*. Truth is scarcely received as truth; there is more of hypocrisy than sincerity in the pale of the church: the dowry makes it more desirable than the beauty. Judas follows Christ for the bag. Sometimes men entertain truth to satisfy their own passions, rather than upon God's account. The religion of many is not the judgment of the man, but the passion of the brute. Many rather entertain the doctrine for the person's sake, than the person for the doctrine, and believe any thing that comes from a man they esteem and affect, as if his lips were as canonical as scripture. You received it *not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, 1 Thess.* 2. 13. So that many times the very same truth delivered by another, is disregarded; which when coming from the fancy and mouth of their own idol, is cried up for an oracle; when as, alas! it was the truth of God in the ass's, as well as in the angel's mouth. And thus they have the word of God with *respect of persons*, and receive it not for the sake of the fountain, but of the channel; and though they entertain the truth of God materially, yet not formally as his truth. *Have not the faith of Christ with respect of persons, James* 2. 1.

4. If men do entertain truth, it is with *unsettled affections*, and much mixture. If men let in some good notions of God, they let in also much of corruption and error, like sponges that can suck up the

foulest water, as well as the sweetest wine; they have the unclean beasts enter into the ark of their souls, as well as the clean. There is a great levity in the heart of man. The Jews cry hosanna to Christ one day, and crucify him the next. They have their heart open one day for truth, and the next turn it out of doors. Those truths which are easy to be understood, are hard to be impressed: our affections will as soon lose them, as our understandings embrace them. Some were willing to rejoice in John's light, which gave a lustre to their minds, not in his heat, which would have given warmth to their affections; for John was a burning and a shining light, and they would rejoice in his light, but not in his heat, and in that too but for a season. We begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh. We go from God with affections, and quickly grow cold again. Our hearts are like lute strings, changed with every change of weather, with every temptation; and scarce one motion of God in a thousand can prevail upon us.

5. In a *carnal improvement* of truth. Some endeavour to make truth subservient to lust, and like spiders draw cursed poison out of the sweetest flowers. As when men hear of God's willingness to pardon and receive repenting sinners, they will argue from hence, for deferring their repentance till they come to die. So, *Psal. 94. 7*, God's patience is made a topic whence to argue against his providence. Wicked men father their sins upon God's word. A liar will find his refuge in the rewards God gave the midwives that lied to Pharaoh, for the preservation of the Israelites' children; and Rahab's lie for preserving the spies: though God rewarded their fidelity, yet we read not that he approved their sin. Some will venture into all kind of wicked company, from Christ's example, who conversed with sinners; when Christ companied with sinners, as a physician with diseased persons, to cure them, not to approve them; but these with persons not to communicate holiness to

them, but receive infection from them. Thus, like the devil, we have scripture at our finger's ends to plead for our lusts. As the sea turns fresh water into salt, so a carnal heart turns divine things to carnal ends. As man subjects the precepts of God to a carnal interest, so they subject the truths of God to carnal fancies. Make a humorous and crazy fancy, the interpreter of divine oracles, and not the Spirit speaking in the word; this is to rifle truth of its true mind and intent; as it is more to rob a man of his reason, the essential constitutive part of man, than of his estate.

Secondly. Enmity against the *duties* God doth enjoin, as well as against the truths he doth reveal. We are not willing to come to God in duty; which strangeness took date from the beginning of our nature. We were *estranged from the womb*, *Psal.* 58. 3. I shall instance in prayer, which is one of the greatest duties, and is an immediate speaking to God. And in that duty wherein there is the greatest intimacy with God, there is the greatest aversion, and consequently an enmity against God.

1. *Unwillingness* to it. Men cannot endure to give God a visit; if they do, it is with such a dulness of spirit, as if they wished themselves out of his company; which testifies that men care not for any correspondence or friendship between God and their souls. Man having an enmity to true holiness, hath from thence an enmity to prayer, because holiness must at least be pretended in prayer, because in that duty there is a real speaking to God, and a communion with him, unto which holiness is required. Now as wicked men hate the truth of holiness, because it is unsuitable to them, so they are not friends to the pretence of it in that duty, because they must for some space be diverted from the thoughts of their beloved lusts. I appeal to you, whether you are not more unwilling to practice prayer in your closets,

than to join with others, as if it were a going to the rack, and rather your penance than privilege. If men do come to God, it is a constrained act, to satisfy conscience; and such are rather servile, than son-like performances, and spring from bondage more than affection. If conscience like a task-master did not lash them to duty, they would never perform it. If we do come willingly, it is for our own ends, to have some deliverance from some trouble. *In trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them, Isa. 26. 16.* In trouble they will visit God; in prosperity he shall scarce hear of them. In affliction he finds them kneeling, and in prosperity he finds them kicking; They can pour out a prayer in distress, and scarce drop a prayer when they are delivered. This unwillingness to address to God, what slight and low thoughts doth it imply? It is a wrong to his providence, as though we stood not in need of his assistance, but that we can do all our business ourselves.

It is a wrong to his excellency, as though there were no amiableness in him to make his company desirable. This enmity is the greater, by how much God's condescension is the greater to admit us into his presence. It was a part of the devil's hatred; they were loath to have Christ present with them. *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Matt. 8. 29.* Men excuse their neglect of private prayer, by their want of opportunity; but indeed they want hearts. We may sooner step up to heaven with a whole ejaculation, than step over the threshold about our business. We naturally desire acquaintance with the greatest persons that may advance our interest; but we are ready to bury our interest, rather than be acquainted with God.

2. *Slightness* in the duty. We are loath to come into God's presence, and when we are come, we are loath to keep with him. When men do not their duty

heartily as to the Lord, they look not upon him as their master, whose work they ought to do, and whose honour they ought to aim at.

(1.) In respect of *time*. Our dullest and dearest time we think fittest for God; when sleep is ready to close our eyes, we think it a fit time to open our hearts. How few morning sacrifices hath God from men? They leap out of their beds to their pleasures or worldly employments, without asking counsel at God's mouth. As men reserve the dregs of their life, their old age, to offer up their souls to God; so they reserve the dregs of the day, their sleepy times, for the offering their service to God.

2. In respect of *frame*. We think any frame will serve God's turn; which certainly speaks our enmity, and slight thoughts we have of him. Man naturally performs duty with an unholy heart, whereby it becomes an abomination to God, *Prov.* 28. 9. He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even *his prayer shall be an abomination*. God calls for our best sacrifices, and we give him the worst, such which he hates; *I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies, Amos* 5. 21. They were duties which God commanded, but he hated them for their evil frames, or corrupt ends. God requires works of grace, and we present him not with so much as the work of nature, but the work of corruption. There is not that natural vigour which we have in worldly business: you may often observe a liveliness in man as to that; but change the scene into a motion towards God, and how suddenly does this vigour shrink, and their hearts become sluggish, and freeze with coldness.

Many times we pray as coldly as if we were loath that God should hear us, and take away that lust which conscience forces us to pray against. How flitting are we in divine meditations, how sleepy in spiritual exercises? This proceeds from the aversion of the soul, and its estrangedness from God. But in

other exercises we are active. The soul doth not awaken itself, and stir up those animal spirits in religious duties, which it will in bodily recreations and sports; whereby it is evident we prefer the latter before any service to God. Since there is a fulness of animal spirits in us, why might they not be excited in holy duties, as well as in corporeal operations, but that there is a reluctancy in the soul to exercise its supremacy over them in this case?

3. *Weariness* in it. We are not weary with that dulness, but in the duty itself; our deadness shows a disaffection, our weariness shows a greater; we are loath that God should have so much as a day's service from us, or any thing that looks like a service. How tired are we in the performance of spiritual duties, when in the vain triflings of time we have a perpetual motion? How will many force themselves to dance and revel a whole night, when their hearts will flag and jade at the first entrance into a religious service. Some in the prophet wished the sabbath over, *Mal.* 1. 13. Ye said also, behold *what a weariness it is.* Attendance on him is a weariness; God had but a poor polluted service from them, and they were weary of that little they gave him, they grudged him that. This unwieldiness in duty is a sign we receive little satisfaction in God's company, and that there is a great unsuitableness between him and us. When our joy begins when the duty ends, it evidences that there was no affectionate motion to God, but a tired and yawning service. Unwilling servants stay not long at their master's work, neither are cheerful in it. If we did love God, it would be with us as with the needle towards the loadstone, there would be a speedy motion, and a fixed union. Saints in heaven, whose affections and judgments are perfect, behold the face of God five or six thousand years together without weariness; but we naturally are neither willing to come, nor come to stay in his presence.

Objection. Natural men had best not pray, or me-

ditate at all, *if even their prayers are acts of enmity.* Answer. Their prayers are not acts of enmity, though the natural enmity be discovered in them. In the mal-performance of the duty, there is a denial of his holiness, but in the total omission there is a denial of his sovereignty, who commands it as a natural duty; or his providence, who orders human affairs; of his holiness too, and righteousness in his law which enjoins it.

4. Neglect of *expecting answers.* Men naturally care not for having the spiritual mercy they pray for of course from God, though they are desirous of any temporal; for the latter they will endeavour, but leave the other wholly upon God's hands, as if they were careless whether they had them or no. They care not whether their letters come to God's hands or no, and therefore care not much for any returns from him: whereas if we have any love to a person we send to, or value of a thing we send for, we should expect an answer every post. The creature in its natural instinct goes beyond such persons; for there is an *αποκαρδοκία*; *For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation, &c. Rom. 8. 19.* Every creature is in a more waiting posture than a natural man. It is a sign we do not own God for our master, or ourselves for his servants, if we do not wait upon him till he shew mercy to us; *As the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their master, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us, Psa. 123. 2.* It implies that we think God will not hear, or cannot hear, or that we have no need of him, and can do well enough without him; or that prayer is no effectual means to procure blessings; if so, why dost thou pray at all? If it be otherwise, why dost thou not wait for an answer? So that there is a disaffection in man to the duty itself, and to God the object of it; or to the subject of it, the thing prayed for. Whereas those that love God, and love the spiritual mercy they pray for, watch thereunto

with thanksgiving; *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving, Col. 4. 2.* They watch for occasion of praise. As we are to be in a praying posture, to desire a blessing, so in a waiting posture to meet with it. But a natural man doth not love to be beholden to God if he can help it; and if he doth praise God after any common mercy received, it may proceed from a natural ingenuity, or present sense of the mercy itself, not from any affection to the donor; but as for any spiritual mercy, as the stirrings of his affections by any truth, he is so far from praising God for them, that he is troubled at them, and quickly quenches them.

5. *Desertion of the duty.* If God does not answer us, naturally we cast off the duty, and say with those in Job, *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray to him, Job 21. 15.* They pray not out of conscience of the command, but merely for the profit; and if God makes them wait for it, they will not wait his leisure, but solicit him no longer. There are two things expressed; that God was not worthy of their service; and, that the serving of him would not bring them in a good revenue, or an advantage of that kind they expected. It is interest draws men to prayer; and when that is not advanced, they will beg no more; like some beggars, if you give them not presently upon their asking, from blessing they turn to cursing; so do men secretly do that which Job's wife advised him to do upon his affliction; *Dost thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God and die, Job. 2. 9.* What a stir, and pulling, and waiting, and caring is here? Cast off all service, be at daggers-drawing with God. So it is vain to serve God, and *what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, or that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts, Mal. 3. 14.* If they have not the benefits they beg, they think God unrighteous, and does them wrong to withhold from them the favours they imagine they have deserved;

and if they have not that recompence when they would, they leave off the serving God any more, as a vain and unprofitable thing. Whereas love moves upon a sense of duty, a natural man that hath an aversion, moves upon a sense of interest. Love is encouraged by answer, but is not dissolved by silence; but a natural man would have God at his beck, and steers his course in duty by the outward profit, not by the inward pleasure.

This enmity might further be evidenced by,

First. Our enmity against *Christ*. Many that are *his own* receive him not, *John* 1. 11. His own by privileges, to whom he gave ordinances, and spiritual meat from his table; his own by profession, who profess they have made a covenant with him, and yet underhand keep up their ancient agreement with hell. Professions of *Christ* are no demonstrations of love to him. We may commend another for his parts and perfections, and yet have a secret grudge against him. All the pretended love unrenewed men have to *Christ*, has no better ground than the *Turks'* love to *Mahomet*; for it has no higher spring than education; and had their lot been to be born among them, they would have loved *Mahomet* with as warm a devotion as now they pretend to love *Christ*; for they love him not formally, but they love that which they were brought up in the profession of, let it be what it will. This enmity against *Christ* reflects upon God himself. *Christ* tells us often, he was sent by God: An affront to an ambassador, is an injury to the majesty he represents. Despising the embassy of an angel, is an act of enmity against God; much more the despising the embassy of his own Son.

This is evident in the practiees of men. It is hard to convince men of the necessity of *Christ*. You see what little fruit *Christ* himself had by all his preaching among the *Jews*. When men are convinced, they endeavour to stifle those convictions. We are as untamed and unruly heifers, that will not en-

sure the yoke; they will break those cords as if they were the most formidable evils, and shake them off from them, as if they were vipers upon their hands. 3. When men cannot stifle their convictions, *yet they are loath to come to Christ. You will not come to me, John 5. 40.* They would bring something of their own to him, for they grudge him the glory of being an entire Saviour: or if they do come to Christ, it is for ease, not for holiness: for when their troubles are ceased, they return to their vomit. If men do come, it is a *restrained* act. Men are therefore said to be drawn, and it is the mighty power of God to bring them. Did not God overpower the hearts of his people, but leave them to themselves, they would still stand it out in rebellion against God.

Secondly. Enmity to the saints. When the devil found God above his reach, he set himself against the creatures that were designed more peculiarly for his service. Just after we read of enmity to God in Adam, we read of enmity to the Godly in Cain. The Italians, when they say *un christiano*, commonly mean a blockhead; and our common speech, a silly Abraham, imports no better; it will be so to the world's end. *Despisers of those that are good*, are ranked with those that are enemies to God, *2 Tim. 3. 3.* It arises from a hatred of holiness itself. And it is enmity to God; for he that would not suffer him to have a holy servant, would not suffer him to have a holy throne, a holy sceptre, a holy crown, a holy kingdom. If men hate the children of light, they do by consequence hate the Father of lights. Mr. Cotton was convinced of his enmity against God by his enmity to the servants of God.

There are several causes of this enmity.

1. *Dissimilitude* between God and a natural man. As likeness in nature and inclinations is a cause of love, so dissimilitude and unsuitableness is a cause of hatred. Distance of manners breeds alienation of affection. This dissimilitude depends also upon the

opposition between the law, and the nature of a sinner; *The law is spiritual, but I am carnal*, Rom. 7: 14. Hence proceeds all that acting against it; for the apostle says, *I consent to the law that it is good*, ver. 15, 16; but my flesh, which hath a repugnancy to it, will not comply with it; the spiritual law and the carnal heart do quarrel with one another.

Dissimilitude between God and a natural man is the greatest, in respect of *nature*. God is infinitely holy, man corrupt and filthy. Darkness and light, heaven and hell, are directly contrary; so is Christ and Belial. Let engagements be what they will, so long as men are of different spirits, they cannot agree. As in regenerate men this dissimilitude works an abhorrency of themselves, as in Job; so in natural men it engenders a disaffection to God.

This dissimilitude is greatest in respect of *ends*. There are in God and men different ends. Man's end is to please himself, and satisfy the desires of the flesh; God's end is to vindicate his law, and show himself the righteous governor of the world, which cannot be attained without a contrariety to the corrupt end of man. The remedy then will be, to get a renewed nature, the image of God new-formed in the soul.

2. *Guilt*. Men fly from God out of shame; they consider the debts they owe God are great; and naturally debtors fly from their creditors, for fear they should exact or demand any thing of them. Adam's guilt was rather attended with a flight from him, than with an approach to him. Those Israelites that desired God no more to speak to them but by Moses, were afraid of his presence too, when his face shone with an heavenly splendour. Terror is essential to guilt, and hatred to a perpetual terror. Their guilt made them fly from that Moses whom they knew to be their friend, when God had set a signal mark upon him. When men cannot discharge their judgments of the belief of a strict account, and dreadful hell, and perpetual immortality, their hearts are pierced with their

sins like so many darts. As they have a thousand sins, so they have a thousand stings, all pointed with God's wrath, and returned back with their own hatred, though it is but the just fruit of their own doings. The frequency of iniquity contracts the more implacable contrariety to God, and makes them as incapable of any union to God, as of repose in themselves. The remedy then is, to labour for justification by the blood of Christ, which is only able to remove that guilt which engenders our hatred.

3. *God's crossing the desires and interests of the flesh.* Natural qualities increase with the resistance of their contraries; so doth sin. The duties God doth principally love, do most of all cross our corruptions; and those are the duties we hate most. Sodomites show most disaffection to Lot, when he opposeth them in the prosecution of their lusts with the angels; *We will deal worse with thee than with them, Gen. 19. 9.* Had God (as well as Micaiah to Ahab) spoke good to natural men in their own esteem, and held them up in their lust; his truth would not be so much imprisoned in unrighteousness, but be highly adored with men's choicest affections; but his commanding things according to his own holy nature, brings into act that habitual hatred which was before in the heart. All hatred arises from an opinion of destructiveness in the object hated. Why do we loathe a thing, but because we imagine it inconsistent with our happiness and wishes? And a sinner being possessed that his darling sin is inconsistent with the holiness of God's law, hates God for being of a nature so contrary to that which he loves. The disappointment our corrupt principles find by any truth of God, exasperates the heart. The Jews' expecting an earthly grandeur by the Messiah, and that they should be made lords paramount of the world, was the cause that they were the more desperate enemies to Christ, when they found his design to be short of their expectations, and that his humility favoured

not their pride, and his meekness was not like to raise him from the footstool of the Roman empire to the throne of the world.

The remedy then is, to have a high esteem of the holiness and wisdom of the law of God, and the advantages he aims at for our good in the enjoining of it. To account it better than thousands of gold and silver. To look upon his commands as not grievous, 1 John 5. 3.

4. *Love of sin.* The greater the love of sin, the more must be our hatred of God; because the more we love that which hath an essential enmity against God, the more we signify that it is our chief good and happiness, and consequently we must hate that which is most contrary to it, and would hinder our enjoyment of it; and therefore our hatred of God's holiness grows up equally with our fondness of sin. When by frequent acts the habitual nature is strengthened, all the powers of doing contrary is swallowed up in that habit. Hence it is said, *the carnal mind is enmity to God*, i. e. the sensual mind, when sensuality hath got the mastery of the mind, and planted sensual habits, there is enmity to God; and it cannot be subject to the law of God, because that habit wholly acts the mind. Men's reasons side with the precepts of God, and conclude them to be the way to felicity; but the law of the mind is too weak for the powerful and pleasing charms of the flesh, whereby they are drawn into an imaginary paradise, but a real captivity. The hating all the dictates of God our Saviour is put upon this score. Light must be odious, when darkness is lovely; God must needs be hated, when his enemy is most caressed. As the love of God in the godly is the cause that they hate sin, so the love of sin in the wicked is the cause that they hate God. Every sin being an aversion from God in its own nature, and a conversion to the creature, according to the multiplying the acts of sin, this aversion from God, and conversion to the creature, must needs be

increased ; and by how much the more love we have to the creature, so much the more love is taken from God. The remedy then is, to endeavour for as great a hatred of sin as thou hast of God ; to look upon sin as the greatest evil in itself, the greatest disadvantage to thy happiness.

5. Injury we do to God. It is proper to men *odisse quos laeserint* ; whereas the person injured might rather hate, yet the person injuring hath often the greatest disaffection. Joseph's mistress first wronged him, and then hated him. Saul first injured David, and then persecuted him ; as if David had been the malefactor, and Saul the innocent. Italians have a proverb to this purpose ; *chifa injuria ne pardonna mai*. The reason is, because they think the injured person must needs hate him ; and love is not an affection due to an enemy. We have also suspicious thoughts of the person we have provoked to be our enemy. We wrong God, and then we hate him ; measuring his affections by human passions ; and thinking, that because we have wronged him, he must needs lay aside all the goodness and patience of his own nature, and watch the first opportunity of revenge. Every sin and act of it being enmity to God, the more the habit of any sin is increased, by frequent acts, the more also is the habitual enmity in the heart increased ; for as every sin has an immediate tendency to the supply of some lust, so it has a remote and principal tendency to the increase of that enmity. Cain first affronts God in his omniscience and providence, and then departs from his presence ; turns his back upon him, and becomes the head of the profane part of the world ; *The presence of the Lord, Gen. 4. 16* ; i. e. from all the ordinance of God, and communion with him in worship. The remedy then is, to endeavour a conformity to God's holy will ; to think with thyself every morning, what shall I do this day to please God ? what duty does he require of me ? The more thou dost obey his will, the more thou wilt love his holiness.

6. *Slavish fear of God.* Men are apt to fear a just recompence for an injury done to another, that he will do him one ill turn for another; and fear is the mother of hatred. God being man's superior, and wronged by him, there follows necessarily a slavish fear of him, and his power; and such a fear makes wrathful and embittered thoughts of God, while he considers God armed with an unconquerable and irresistible power to punish him. It is as natural for a man to hate that which he conceives to be against him, as for any animal to hate that whose acts it fears do tend to a dissolution of its being. The devils tremble, *James 2. 19, φοβούνται*; they have a great horror, and their enmity is as great as their fear; nay, heightened by their fear, because they have no hopes of pardon; they do their utmost to oppose God and have companions in misery; it is impossible a man should love God, while he is apprehended as an irreconcilable adversary. The stronger the impressions of fear, the quicker the inclinations to hatred. But when the evil feared begins to strike, it makes the hatred shoot out in volleys of curses and blasphemies, which is evident in the damned. God considered as a Judge, is the object not of comforting, but terrifying faith; no man can naturally love that Judge who he thinks will condemn him. A fear of God as an inexorable judge, that we have highly wronged, will nourish an enmity against him.

Then, be much in communion with God; strangeness is the mother of fear; we dread men sometimes, because we know not their disposition. The beasts themselves delight in the company of man, when being familiarized to him, they fancy his disposition, and taste his kindness to them, which when they were unacquainted with, they would fly from his presence with the greatest speed. Study the reconciling love of God in the gospel; consider much the loveliness and amiableness of his nature, his ardent desire thou wouldest be his friend more than his enemy. A cause

of our hating God, is our ignorance of him ; for if we did but know how good he is, how merciful to man, and to us ; if we would but leave our sin, we could not possibly hate him.

7. *Pride.* Self-denial is absolutely against the pride of reason ; and this is the first lesson God teaches us. It is the first letter in the alphabet of the gospel of peace, and therefore we are against him. Men lift up the pride of reason, against the truth of God, and the pride of heart against the will of God. Hence it appears, that self is the great incendiary of the soul against God. The enmity of Tyre against God is charged upon this foot of account ; *Thy heart is lifted up in the midst of the sea ; thou hast set thy heart as the heart of God, Ezek. 28. 2.* She would rather have her wisdom admired by God, than God's wisdom admired by her. The sharpest enmities in the world are founded upon this vice ; This makes the greatest combustions in common wealths. Men fear to be overtopped by one another. All other vices desire companions. A drunkard loves his good-fellows ; he cares not to drink alone. An unclean person must have his mate. Swearers hate those that come not up to their own pitch ; but a proud man would have none keep an equal pace with him ; he cannot endure a companion, but would have all others under his feet. Pride is naturally against God ; and therefore sin is often called a lifting up of the heart against God, a hardening the heart against him. Then endeavour after humility. Study the humility of God, who is more humble to us than we can be to him. Reflect more upon thy vileness than thy worth.

8. *Love of the world.* The greater dearness of sensual pleasures, the further our divorce from God. The love of the world is inconsistent with the love of God ; *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not him, 1 John 2. 15.* It puts us under an impossibility while that love remains, to entertain the Spirit of truth, *The Spirit of truth whom the world*

cannot receive, John 14. 17. Whosoever will be a friend of the world, is an enemy to God. The friendship of the world is enmity with God; *Ye adulterers, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?* James 4. 4; know you not it is an unquestionable truth, your own consciences cannot be strangers to it. Indulgence to carnal interests and pleasures mounts up to a fierceness against God; *Jesurun waxed fat and kicked,* Deut. 32. 15. The wisdom of the flesh is first earthly, then sensual, then devilish; when once the mind is possessed by an earthly and sensual temper, it will not be long before it grows up to devilishness, and you know that can be no friend of God. What begins in earthliness, earthly principles and ends, and proceeds on to sensuality, will end in devilishness both principle and practice. Whosoever loves his own pleasure and voluptuousness, must needs hate whatsoever is contrary to it, and would destroy it; this is the great root of anger, revenge in man, and our contempt of God.

The remedy then is, to look upon the world with scorn; to think the soul above it; and that the contentments and pleasures of the world are fitter for beasts, and at best but accommodations for thee as a traveller, not a fit pillow to repose thy soul on. Despise the world, and the devil hath scarce any bait and argument left to move thee to an estrangedness from, and an enmity against God.

Now if all the saints that ever were, should meet together in a Synod, to consult of the truth of this proposition, that the heart of man is enmity against God, they would all bear witness to it *nemine contradicente*; and he that denies it, I may confidently affirm, did never seriously read the scripture, or cast one practical glance upon his own heart.

PART V.

THE SUBJECT IMPROVED.

The desperate atheism of man's heart—Enmity against God worse than atheism—Mocks God—Denies his authority—Is of the same nature with Satan's—Every natural man is a friend to Satan—Actual effects of it—Is worse than the enmity of hell—Accounts God the greatest evil—Justifies God in punishing—In his severest judgments—Justifies eternal punishment—The wonderful patience of God—Necessity of regeneration—Grace alters nature—Difficulty of conversion and partial success of the gospel—Excellence of obedience—Necessity of examination—Address to sinners—To the regenerate—Motives to enforce these addresses—Aggravations of man's enmity against God—The great misery of such a state.

I. **T**HE information to be derived from the subject.

1. How desperate is the *atheism* in every man's heart by nature? What a mass of villany is in the heart of man? What! to make God no God? set up our wills against the will of God? When we say an enemy to God, we must conceive all that may denominate a man base and abominable. What more can be added, than to say, such a man is an enemy to love itself? Sin and God are at direct odds. To

harbour a traitor in a house after proclamation, is a capital crime, and comes under the charge of high-treason. What then is the harbouring of sin against God, but involving thyself in the same rebellion which every sin includes in its own nature? This enmity to God has this aggravation in it, that it cannot upon any account whatsoever be just.

God himself cannot command a creature not to love him; before he can command this, he must change his nature, cashier his loveliness, cease to be the chief good. God cannot command any thing unjust; but this is intrinsically unjust, eternally unjust, not to love that which is infinitely amiable. It had been unjust to command an act of the highest disingenuity and ingratitude, to hate the author of our mercies. It had been against the original nature of a rational creature, to be an enemy to that which is its chiefest good. Our loving God doth not arise merely from the command of God enjoining it, but from the nature of God, and the creature's relation to him. None but will confess, that had God never commanded us to love him, it had been highly abominable for a creature to hate his Maker and Benefactor: therefore in the moral law or decalogue, the love of God is not explicitly commanded, but supposed as a fundamental and indispensable principle; from whence all other commands are necessary consequences: so that this enmity against God is not only against his command, but against his very nature, and against the fundamental and indispensable principle of all God's commands, and all the duties which as rational creatures we owe to God.

The desperateness of this natural enmity will appear, (1.) In that it is *as bad*, and in some respects *worse than atheism*. We complain much, and not without cause, of the growing atheism of the times; but we shall find as bad and worse than we complain of in our own nature, and the practices of men. *Miran-*

dula says, a speculative atheist is the most prodigious monster in the world, but a practical. An atheist that denies the being of God, does not so much affront him, as a natural man that owns his being, but walks as if there were no God; as if he were not a just and righteous God; as if he made use of his sovereign power to make laws for the prejudice of his creature.

The atheist barely *denies God's being*, the other *mocks him*. They have *turned to me the back, and not the face*, Jer. 32. 33. This puts a slight upon him, turning the back upon him, which is an act of disdain, as if God were the most contemptible being in the world. Thou that turnest thy face to thy dog, thy beast, the devil, usest God with more contempt than thou dost thy dog, thy swine, thy ox, thy ass, yea the devil himself. The atheist that denies God's being, and yet walks according to moral principles, is like the son in the gospel, that told his father he would not go, and yet did; which Christ commends above the other, which acknowledged his father's authority to command him, and pretended a readiness to obey, but answered not his acknowledgments by the performance of his duty. A profane man, or a hypocrite, is more an atheist than one that professeth himself so, in as much as actions, and a continual succession and circle of them, makes a greater discovery of the principles of the heart, than the motions of the tongue. Would not that man, who in his belief of a Deity, doth things which fall under the censure of God's justice, and contrary to his law, and odious among men, though not punishable by man, do things far worse, did not the fear of laws, the anger of his prince, the pain and disgrace of punishment restrain him? Surely he would: for that principle which carries him against his reason and professed religion in his practices against God, would hurry him further, were there not some powerful limits set to him by human laws. Now what does

this evince, but that he honours man more than God, fears man more than God, obeys man more than God, owns the power of man more than the power of God, which he pretends to acknowledge and believe.

The atheist denies God's *being*, the other *his authority*. And in denying his authority, virtually denies his being: for it is a contradiction to be God, and not to be sovereign. Does not man imply, by the breaking God's laws, that he would not have God act as a sovereign; that he would have him but a careless God, an unholy and unrighteous God in giving him the reins, and not prohibiting by holy laws any wickedness his heart is inclined unto? What then would become of God's being? His Deity cannot outlive the life of his authority and righteousness. If he ceased to be a righteous Lawgiver, and a holy maintainer of his laws, he would cease to be a God. So that every breach of the law is a virtual deposing him from his supreme government, and consequently a virtual deposing him from his Deity.

(2.) This enmity is of the same *nature with the devil's enmity*. It is not indeed in the present state wherein man is so intense, because his is direct, man's implicit. But yet, [1.] Natural men have a *diabolical nature*. There are but two seeds, the seed of the woman, and that of the serpent; two natures, the divine and diabolical. Satan is the father of wicked men, and fathers derive their nature to their children. He is not their father by creation, nor by generation, but by a diffusion of his principles into them. *You are of your father the devil, John 8. 44.* God made man in creation according to his own image; and the devil quickly by corruption brings him into his likeness. In scripture is not meant by the devil only a particular person, but a nature: so Christ intimates in his rebuke to Peter: *Get thee behind me Satan, Matt. 16. 23.*

Peter, an eminent apostle, who had a little before

made an illustrious profession of Christ being the Son of God, ver. 16, 17, is now called devil; not because he was really the person of the devil, but the devil's nature did then exert itself in him; for that advice proceeded not from a divine, but diabolical disposition; for it made directly for the serving the devil's kingdom, which was only to be overthrown by the death of Christ. Hell itself could not produce a more devilish result of its deepest counsels, than the advice which Peter now gave, which would highly have promoted the interest of hell. And do but observe the reason why Christ calls him Satan: *Thou savourest not the things which be of God, &c.* ver. 23. The things of God, and the things of man, and savouring the things of God, and the things of man, are set in opposition; and a man that savours not the things of God, but the things of man, such a man and Satan are all one and the same in the account of Christ. So by Christ sometimes is not meant a particular person, but a nature: *Christ in you the hope of glory, Col. 1. 27.* What in one place is called the divine nature, is by Paul called Christ; not the person of Christ, but the nature of Christ; i. e. that spiritual principle of grace or new nature, which is the earnest of your future inheritance, and so a ground of hope. A natural man is wholly carnal, *Róm. 7. 18.* There is *no good thing* dwells in him, no good principle; it may lodge a while, but it hath no settled abode; and what is not good, is of the devil. As God is the author of all good, so is the devil of all moral evil. So that a natural man is wholly diabolical.

[2.] Every natural man is a *friend* to the devil. There are but two sovereigns in the world, one rightful, and the other usurping. If we are enemies to the right sovereign, we must be friends to the usurper; if enemies to God, friends to the devil. *He works in the children of disobedience, Eph. 2. 2, 3,* not by force, but by consent: for he works in them accord-

ing to the desires of the flesh, which the apostle implies *fulfilling the desires of the flesh*, ver. 3. If the love of the world be enmity to God; *The friendship of the world is enmity with God*, James 4. 4; then enmity to God must needs be a love of the devil; enmity to God implying a friendship with every thing that hath the same disposition against him. The love of the world, i. e. of the sin and unrighteousness of the world, necessarily includes virtually love of the god of the world, which is the devil's title, 2 Cor. 4. 4. And so a man adores Satan as a god, in loving that world the devil is the god of; that wickedness the devil is the head of, above God. *Rebellion against God is called a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell*, Isa. 28. 18, (not with the punishments, but principles of hell;) and being a friend of the devil, he must needs be a friend to the grand design of the devil, Isa. 14. 12, 13, 14, and ver. 4, was spoke to the king of Babylon. The knot of friendship in the world is some particular man's design, which both friends agree in, and drive on. Now his design seems to be affecting the throne and authority of God; for God threatening the king of Babylon, and in him, as the type, the great antichrist, compares him to Lucifer, who was not content with his station as a subject, but would mount into the chair of the supreme power.

[3.] Thy enmity against God is in some respect as much, in regard of *the actual effects of it*, as the devil's is, though not in regard of disposition. We declare our enmity as far as we can: we cannot pull God out of heaven; we cannot nail Christ to the cross again, and pierce his heart; we cannot rail at him to his face as the Jews did; but the despising his laws, disowning his power granted by heaven over us, is the only thing we can do against him; and this we do as much as we can, as much as the gripes of conscience and our interest in the world will give us leave. We virtually deprive him of that which was the re-

ward of his sufferings, viz. his power; of the design of his sufferings, viz. the propagation of his evangelical law in our heart. And he that would destroy the dearest things God and Christ have left in the world, and that which he gave the greatest charge for the preservation of, would act all the villainies against the person of Christ as well as against what he had in the world, and against the essence of God, were it in his power; thou dost as much in this, as the devil can do. The being of God and the person of Christ are above his reach as well as ours. All that he can do is to trample upon his laws, and list others in rebellion against God, and in this thou dost comply with him. He can do no more, and thou dost as much.

[4.] It is a *worse enmity than is in hell*. This enmity is more disingenuous than that in hell. Our hatred of God is worse than that of the damned, they despairingly hate him under the inevitable and unavoidable strokes of justice, thou hatest him while thou art hedged in with the expressions of his goodness. They hate him under vials of wrath, and we under showers of mercy: they in terror of damnation, and we under the sense of kindness. They hate him because he inflicts what is hurtful, and we because he commands what is profitable and holy. Our hatred of God is worse than the devil's hatred of him. We hate God, who contrived our redemption, and sent his Son to accomplish it; the devils had not those obligations laid upon them. Christ came not for them, nor shed his blood for their recovery. They hate their Creator, but we our Creator and Redeemer too. The devils hate him that came to torment them and destroy their works, we hate him that came to bless us, and save our souls.

2. Information. God is *the greatest evil* in the account of every natural man. If there be in us a greater enmity to God and his law than to any thing else, it implies that we think him the greatest evil,

and the worst of beings. Evil, and not good, is the object of hatred. As love is the propension of the mind to something as good, so hatred is an alienation of the mind from something as evil, either really, or supposedly*. We cannot possibly hate good as good, as we cannot possibly love evil as evil. Now nothing but sin is absolutely evil, and therefore nothing but sin should be the absolute object of our hatred. But seeing that love which should be set upon God, is set upon sin, and that hatred which should have only sin for its object, pitches upon God as its object, it is hence clear, that we account sin the highest good, and God the greatest evil.

Though a man doth not hate God as God, yet there being more of his hatred spent against God than against any thing else, it is most certain that God is virtually accounted by us the most detestable being. Do we offend any so much as we do God? Do we love the prosecution of any thing which is distasteful to man, as we do that which is an abomination to God? Is there any thing in the world we do more rejoice in than that whereby God is prejudiced? Is there any thing we do love and pursue with greater violence, than that which is hateful and injurious to him? Are we so absolutely contrary to any man, any creature in our natural inclinations, dispositions, affections, and desires, as unto God? Is it not clearly manifest by our inward and outward carriage, that we imply, that God is the greatest evil, and we rank him who is unchangeably good, in the place of sin, which is unchangeably bad. As love is carried out in desire for the object beloved, so hatred is a flight from it. As love is accompanied with joy at the presence of a beloved object, so is hatred attended with a detestation. Are we not naturally more desirous of opportunities of sin, than opportunities of service to our maker? Are we ever so cheerful in the presence of God, and

* Plutarch's Morals, p. 536, 537.

communion with him in religious services, as in our sports, recreations, and sinful practices? What then has most of our love, what do we account our supreme happiness, and our worst misery?

3. Information. It justifies God in his acts of punitive justice. (1.) In his *severest judgments* in the world. Who can blame God for his severities against those that hate him, especially after riches of forbearance? Consider man as his desperate enemy, and you may more admire his clemency, than accuse his justice. You may wonder that he does not destroy the whole stock of mankind, as well as send some few drops and hailstones of judgment upon the world. We may rather stand amazed at his patience, that he suffers such creatures to live, than murmur at his judgments, for not a day but we commit many acts which manifest this hatred. For as all actions truly good partake of the nature of love to the chiefest good; so all unworthy actions which are at a distance from God the chief end, are marshalled by, and tinctured with that enmity which lurks in the soul. It is equal God should be a judge to condemn, where he is rejected as a sovereign to rule.

(2.) It justifies God in his judgments upon *infants*. Indeed we call infants innocent, and we are startled at the pain and sufferings of babes; but this doctrine is a sufficient curb to any accusations of God in such proceedings. Do we not kill vipers, and noxious creatures in the nest? Infants are endued with an inimical and hostile nature against God, though they exert it not by reason of the weakness of their organs. If *Death reigned over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, Rom. 5. 14;* enmity surely reigned over them. The frost which by congealing a viper, suspends its motion, does not expel its natural venom, (which it hath in as great a quantity as the liveliest) though at present it binds up the activity of it, which will show itself when outward impediments are removed by heat. Neither does the

inability of infants exercising this enmity, discharge their nature from an inconceivable mass of it; nay you may perceive some starts of it even in them; Did you never see envy, passion, sensuality in an infant? We may more wonder that God does not dash them in pieces at their first appearance in the world, as we do young wolves and ravenous creatures, than that he should use his right over them for their original perversity, and take them out of the world.

(3) It justifies the *eternity* of punishment. Who can charge God with injustice, for punishing eternally a creature who doth eternally hate him; to keep that person in being to his everlasting damage, that does wish, and if it were in his power, would accomplish the destruction of God himself; can any punishment be too hard, any duration of it too long for him that is an enemy to the best of beings? To one infinitely good, and therefore disingenuous; to one infinitely powerful, and therefore intolerably foolish.

4. *Information.* What an admirable prospect may we take here of God's *patience*? With what astonishment may we review all the former as well as the present age of God's forbearance towards men! That he should preserve such a crew of disingenuous monsters, as we all naturally are; *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, Rom. 2. 4.* Had he not had riches of goodness, forbearance, and long suffering, and infinite riches too the enmity of man against him had exhausted all before this time; and being the riches of goodness as well as long suffering, it makes our enmity appear the blacker. A grain of goodness is no fit object for hatred, much less riches of it. How many millions of such haters of him, breathe every day in his air, are maintained by his bounty, have their tables spread, and their cups filled to the brim, and that in the maddest of their reiterated belchings out of this enmity against him, under sufficient provocations, to the highest indignation?

5. Information. Hence we see the root of all sin in the world. What is the reason men row against the stream of their own consciences? What is the reason men of sublimated reason, and clear natural wisdom, are voluntary slaves to their own lusts, which they serve with as delightful, as disgraceful a drudgery against the light of their own minds? It is from this contrariety to God, seated in their very nature, they could never else so earnestly, so chearfully do the devil's work before God's. They could never else be deaf to the loud voice of God, and have their ears open to the least whisper of Satan. Whence proceeds our stupidity, the folly of our thoughts, the levity of our minds, the deadness of our affections, the sleepiness of our souls, our inexcusable carelessness in holy duties, more than any thing of a temporal concern, but from this aversion from God! It is this enmity, dulls our heart in any service. Though conscience which is in us, to keep up the interest of God's law, spurs us on to duty, yet sin that is within us, that keeps up the quarrel against heaven, hinders us from it, or diverts us in it.

6. Information. Hence follows the necessity of *regeneration*. This division between God and his creature will not admit of any union without a change of nature. The carnal mind, as such, can never be reconciled to God before this be wrought. The old frame must be demolished, and a new one reared; for a change of state cannot be without a change of nature. It is impossible that this nature, so corrupt and contrary, can ever be reconciled to the pure and holy nature of God; what communion hath light with darkness? We must be God's friends, before we can be sin's enemies; the root of bitterness must be taken away, habitual corruption removed, the heart will never else stand right as a compass towards heaven. Who can ever fight against his nature? No man will ever resist the devil without a change; we cannot without the rooting out this enmity, make a profitable

approach to God. What expectation canst thou have of a good look from him, when thou comest to him with all thy natural hatred of him? How canst thou dare to come to him, who knows every circumstance of thy enmity better than thou dost thy name, and is so well acquainted with thy heart? What hopes can you have of any answer from him? If we bring our wickednesses with us to Gilgal, the place of worship, even there in the solemnest duties will God hate us, *All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them.* Hos. 9. 15. If the mind be filled with hostile principles against the purity of God's commands, it must be inexperienced and inactive to every work; *To every good work reprobate.* Tit. 1. ult. If the head be sick, needs must the heart be faint. If the counselling-faculty be false, cursed must be all its advice.

7. Information. That is not grace which does not alter nature. Morality therefore is not grace, because it doth not change nature; if it did, many of the heathens were as near to God as the best of christians; whatsoever may be done by the strength of nature, cannot alter it: for no nature can change itself. Poison may be great within the skin, like to a viper's, be we never so speckled with a reformation. Freedom from gross sins argues not a friendship to God. None were so great enemies to Christ as the pharisees, to whom Christ gives no better a title, than that of the devil's children, and charges them with the hatred both of himself and his Father, *John 15. 24.* The enmity may be the greater under a zealous and devout morality. The poor publicans crowded in to Christ, while the self-righteous Jews derided him, and rejected the counsel of God, and put the word of God from them. *Luke 7. 30. Acts 13. 46.* It is a foolish thing for men to boast of their own heart, or outward conformity; thou canst not tell how soon that heart thou boastest of, may boil out its enmity. The plant which is pleasant to the eye, may be poison to the

stomach. Boast not therefore of thy glossy morality, thy chequered skin, so long as there is a venom in thy nature. Whatsoever excellencies a natural man has, are all tainted with this poison, his wisdom, learning, moral virtue, and are rather aggravations than excuses.

8. Information. Hence follows the necessity of *applying to Christ*. As there is a necessity of a change of nature in us, because our enmity to God is a moral enmity; so there is a necessity of a compensation and satisfaction to God for the preservation of God's honour, because it is an unjust enmity, not rising from any injury that ever God did to us; and because his enmity to us, provoked by our disaffection to him, is a legal enmity, his law violated must be satisfied. Our enmity is unjust, and therefore must be parted with; God's enmity against us is just, and therefore must be removed by a satisfaction. And since we are unable to give God a compensation for our wrongs, we must have recourse by faith to that blood which hath given him a compleat satisfaction. It is Christ only that satisfies God for us, by the shedding of his blood, and removes our enmity by the operation of his Spirit.

9. Information. See hence the reason of the *difficulty of conversion, and the little success the gospel hath*. All the words in the world will not change nature; men strive against the Spirit, and will not come under the power of it if they might have their own will. Can you by exhortations ever reconcile a wolf and a lamb? Can you by rational arguments new-mould the nature of a fierce lion, or by moral discourses stop the tide of the sea? Though man be a rational creature, yet corrupt habits in him answer to mere nature in them, and sway, and tide us as much against God. Grave discourses can never set a man straight that is born crooked. It is no easy thing for the heart of man, possessed so long by this cursed principle, to surrender itself upon God's summons;

mén are not so easily reconciled, when the hatred hath been hereditary in the family; this has been of as long a standing, within a few hours, as Adam himself. To turn to God in ways of righteousness, is contrary to the stream of corrupt nature, and therefore it must be overpowered by a flood of almighty grace, as the stream of the river is by the tide of the sea.

10. Information. If there be such an enmity against the sovereignty of God in the heart of man, this shows us *the excellency of obedience*. It is the endeavour of the creature, as much as in him lies, to exalt God, to keep him upon his throne, to preserve the sceptre in his hand, and the crown upon his head. As faith is a setting a seal to the truth of God, so is obedience a setting a seal to the dominion of God, and subscribing to the righteousness thereof. It is called a confirmation of God's law, an affection to the honour of it, *Cursed be him that confirms not all the words of this law, to do them. Deut. 27. 26.* It is an establishing it, as a standing infallible rule, and consequently an establishing the lawgiver, and an applause to the righteousness of his government. God being the highest perfection, and infinitely good, therefore whatsoever rule he gives the creature, must be good and amiable, or else it cannot proceed from God. A base and vile thing can never proceed from that which is only excellent. An unreasonable thing can never proceed from that which is altogether reason and regular; therefore the obedience to God's law is an acknowledging the excellent goodness, love, wisdom, righteousness of the lawgiver, and a bearing witness to it in the face of the world.

II. Use is for *examination*. Examine yourselves by those demonstrations laid down in the first part, whether this enmity be prevalent in you or no.

1. Have you yet a stoutness of heart against hearing the law of God, which crosses the desires of the flesh?
2. Are you unwilling to be determined by divine in-

junctions? 3. Doth your heart swell most against those laws which are most spiritual, and which God doth most strictly urge? 4. Do you fall out, and quarrel with your own consciences, when they press upon you any command of God? 5. Do you countenance that law in your members, that law of sin, in opposition to the law of your mind? 6. Are you willing to be at more pains and expence to violate God's law, than to observe it, and preserve the honour of it? 7. Do you perform things materially righteous, because of the agreeableness of them to your humour and constitution, out of respect to your reputation, or, which is worse, out of an affection to some base lust and carnal end, or out of a slavish fear of God? 8. Are the laws of men more valued and feared by you than the laws of God? Do you more readily obey them? 9. Are you desirous and diligent in the drawing men from compliance with God's laws, to be your companions in any sin you are addicted unto? 10. Do you take pleasure in the affronts men offer to God, and make them the matter of your sport and jollity? So much as you find of this temper in any of your souls, so much of enmity there is.

III. Use is for exhortation. 1. To *sinners*. Lay down thy arms against God. How can you hear these things without saying, Lord, deliver me from this nature? Oh! what should I be an enemy to so good a God? Did God put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent? and shall I put an enmity between God and my soul, and a love between my heart and the serpent? Shall I change this promise of God, and make my dearest affections embrace the serpent's seed, and refuse God himself? Lay down thy cudgels, strip thyself, yield thyself to him upon his own terms. How canst thou sit down at rest in hating God, and being hated by him? While thou art in thy natural condition, thou canst not be a friend to God; for *they that are in the flesh, cannot please him, Rom. 8. 8.* How can two

walk together, unless they be agreed? We must change our enmity into friendship if ever we would be happy. We must accept of his terms, to be at peace with him, or feel the bitter fruits of his powerful justice. We may pronounce in the presence of God, that if we henceforward endeavour not to get out of a natural state, it is a resolute maintaining the war against heaven.

Lament this enmity, and be *humbled* for it. If there be a common ingenuity, it will make thee tremble to think of thy hatred of mercy itself. Every sin is a branch of this enmity, and doth contribute to the increase of it, as acts strengthen habits, and as every part of the sea, according to its quantity and strength, contributes to the roaring and violent eruptions of it. We have robbed God; for as much obedience as we have given to the flesh, we have taken from God: therefore rise as high as the fountain in your humiliations; and lie low, not for a particular sin only, but for that enmity in thy nature, which is the root of all the sins thou ever didst act. The evil in our actions is transient; but there is a perfect and overflowing fulness of evil in thy nature to animate a thousand acts of the same kind; as the habit of love to God resident in the soul, can command and spirit a thousand acts with its own nature.

2. Use of exhortation. To *regenerate* persons, such as by the powerful working of the grace of God, and the over-ruling hand of the Spirit, have been brought out of this state of enmity. Besides those things which you may gather from the former informations, as to grow up in all the parts of the new creature, to further and advance that regenerate work in your soul: to make frequent applications of the blood of Christ, and to have your heart lifted up in the ways of God, and obedience to him, thereby to bear witness to Christ, the righteousness of God in his administrations in the world: let me advise to these things.

1. Possess your hearts with great admirations of *the grace of God towards you*, in wounding this enmity in your hearts, and changing your state. The apostle winds up our admirations of the love of Christ upon this peg; *When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, Rom. 5. 10.* Our salvation from sin by regeneration, is the fruit of his resurrection and life, as our salvation from the guilt of sin by satisfaction was the fruit of his death: and not only so, saith he, but *we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now receive the atonement, ver. 11.* This reconciliation of us being the fruit of the first promise of breaking the serpent's head, *Gen. 3. 15*; i. e. the projects and designs of the devil, to set God and man at eternal variance; makes it the more admirable: that as soon as man had immediately after his creation, and being made lord of the rest of the sublunary creatures, cast off his Lord and Creator, that just at that time, under the present sense of that unworthy slight, he should be laying about for the good of fallen man, and make a promise for the dissolving this enmity, and change this resistance of God into a more righteous one; viz. a variance with, and an eternal enmity against the serpent.

And hath not this been the case of some of our souls, that God hath grappled with us, and changed the current of our wills, even at the very time of the spitting out our venomous disaffection against him? It was Paul's case, and the case of many, I am sure, since that time: if such a circumstance as this did attend thy first conversion, it should methinks enlarge thy notes, and wind up thy astonishments to a higher pitch. But howsoever it be, change your complaints into praises for your deliverance, though it be as yet imperfect. A lively and warm sense of it would quicken thy obedience, and spirit thee more in the ways of God than all thy complaints can do. It is

to the grace of God that we owe the decays of it. It is a particular assisting grace that keeps it down, and binds it up at any time. If we are sometimes without considerable disturbances by it, it is not for want of the will of the flesh, nor for want of strength enough in the flesh, even in the best of men, but it is staked down, and stopped by the powerful operation of the Spirit, and the working of irresistible grace. To this purpose often reflect upon your former state; it will set a gloss upon the grace of God. The more disingenuous our enmity was, the more illustrious will it make the love of God to appear in our eye.

2. Endeavour to *hate sin as much as thou hast hated God*. What reason have we to bewail ourselves? None of us have ever yet hated sin so much, as naturally we have hated God. Turn this affection now as much upon thy great enemy, as thou hast done upon thy best friend. The deeper gashes thou hast given to God, Christ, and his glory, the wider wounds, the harder blows, the sharper stabs give to thy sin. Have as great an animosity against it, as you have had stoutness of heart against God. Come not under the power of any one: lift up thy hand most against spiritual sins: shew no obedience to the law of sin in thy members.

3. Inflame thy *love to God* by all the considerations thou canst possibly muster up. Outdo thy former disaffection by a greater ardeny of love. Sincerely aim at his glory. Eye his command only in every thing thou dost. Delight to please him above thyself. Endeavour by all means to draw others to think well of him, and be at peace with him. Take pleasure in thy conversion of others to him. Rejoice at any glory he gains in the world. The unjust enmity he receives from others, should procure a greater respect from us to God. Oh that we could make up, by an intenseness of love, the injury he receives by the enmity of others, and balance their hatred by an increase of our affection! Oh that we could delight

ourselves in him, as much as we have been displeased with him! That he might be as dear to us, as he is odious to devils; and that the devils themselves, in the degrees of their detestation of God, might not outstrip us in the degrees of our affection to him.

4. *Bewail* this enmity. Are the best of us perfect? Are we stripped of all relics of it? Has any man on earth put off the dregs of the flesh, and commenced an angel in purity? Have we got the start of all the saints of old, and expelled it wholly out of us? Have we outstripped the great apostle, who complained of sins dwelling in his flesh? Is there no more need of groans to be delivered from this body of death? Ah! what relics are there? Doth not the best man find it a laborious undertaking, to engage against the remainders of nature in him, and to manage a constant and open hostility against the force of the sensual appetite, and the spiritual wickedness in the high places of his soul, though much wounded by the grace of God? It is this gasping body of death in a regenerate man that gives life to those swarms of imperfections in his religious duties. It is this that cripples our obedience; that shackles our feet, when they should run the ways of God's commandments. It is this that drags away our heart after unworthy objects, in the midst of those services wherein we attempted the nearest approaches to God. It is upon the score of this lurking principle in us, that we may charge all the foils we suffer in our strongest wrestling for heaven.

And is not this cause enough to bewail it? One great ingredient in any day's repentance is, an acknowledgment of the due demerit of sin, and the righteousness of God in his threatenings and punishment; and this must be the ground the abhorrency our souls naturally have to his statutes; *They shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity, Levit. 26, 43*; i. e. they shall repent of it, and acknowledge my righteousness in it, because, even because: and

ver. 40, they were to confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, i. e. the iniquity derived from their fathers; for their actual sins are expressed by *the trespass they trespassed against God*. Are there not daily starts of this nature in us? Do we not need a daily pardon for it? And is it for God's honour to pardon us without an humble acknowledgment? It is the greatest part of our enmity that we are not more affected with it. Our breaking God's commands, is not so much as the inherent contempt of God in us; a man may receive injuries from another, and lightly pass them over, when he knows the person hath no disaffection to them.

It was not so much the act of adultery and murder that Nathan by God's commission charges so home upon David, as his despising God's commands, and despising God himself; *Wherefore hast thou despised the command of the Lord? 2 Sam. 12. 9; and ver. 10, thou hast despised me*. And it is not so much our actual breaches, as our natural and indwelling contempt of God, that is most chargeable upon us in our approaches to him, and exercises of our repentance before him. If a likeness to Adam's sin be made a ground of the aggravation of actual sin; *But they like men have transgressed, Hos. 6. 7*; implying that to be the greatest; then the corruption of nature we derived from him by the means of that sin, must be the highest and most lamented.

5. *Watch* against the daily exertings and exercises of this enmity. When we would be serious in the concerns of God and our own souls, do we not feel some inward assaults against our own resolutions, and some secret adversary within striving against our most spiritual reflection? and is there no need of a watch? Alas! this being a constant adversary, requires our constant care. It being a secret and inward adversary, requires our utmost diligence and prudence. Who is there of us, who serves God with that care, and obeys him with that reverence, as he

doth his worldly superior? Do we not sometimes hate instruction when it goes against the grain, and cast the words of God behind our backs, and thus kick against the Lawgiver? Do we not many times prefer the flesh before him? (I know in the bent of the heart a godly man doth not, but in some particular acts he may and doth.) Are not our understandings more frequently awakened to any thing, than that which God doth command? Are not our desires too vehement for those things which have no commerce with the law and mind of God? Have we no doubts of his faithfulness, no murmuring against his sovereign disposal of things, no risings of heart against his law, against his providences, no self-confidence, envy, ambition, revenge? All these are but the branches of this bitter root. And is not our exactest care and constant watchfulness requisite against the workings of this natural cursed disposition? Sure it is, and sure it must be.

Motives. These exhortations.

1. Consider the *disingenuity* of this enmity. There is no necessity thou shouldest be his enemy, it will not be honourable to thee to stand out. Peter denied Christ, when his own life was in danger; and thou hatest God, who would put the life of thy soul out of danger. It is against all the obligations of nature and grace, to be an enemy to him to whom thou owest thy being, thy preservation from hell, and recovery from misery, but for thy own fault. Do we not voluntarily subject ourselves to men, whom we esteem good, though the loveliness of their persons, and the goodness of their nature, be infinitely short of God, and are as much below him in alluring qualities, as they are in greatness and majesty? What benefits can men bestow upon their servants, like those God doth recompence his sincere adorers with? Men may love their friends more than they can help them; but the loving-kindness of God is attended with a power as infinite as itself.

(1.) God hath been *good* to us. He is love, and we are out of love with love itself, 1 *John* 4. 8. Is he not our Father? why should we not honour him? Is he not our master? why should we not obey him? Is he not our benefactor? why should we not affect him? Whence have we our mercies, but from his hand? who besides him maintains our breath this moment? Would he call for our spirits this instant, they must depart from us to attend his command? What shall his benefits be made weapons of unrighteousness, and the devil's arms against him? Christ died for us while we were enemies, and shall we stand out as enemies still? It will be the least thou canst do to love him at the very time he shows mercy to thee, and that is every minute. There is not a moment wherein thou canst with any ingenuity be an enemy to him, because there is not a moment wherein he is not thy guardian, wherein thou dost not taste of his bounty. God hath let thee have thy swing all this time, thou hast had thy rendezvous at thy pleasure, and he never laid wait for thee but in kindness. He might have dwelt with us, as we do with venomous creatures, and destroyed such a generation of vipers, and crushed the cockatrice in the egg. What a disgraceful thing is it to put off the nature of men for that of devils, to hate God under mercy, as much as the devils do under wrathful anger? Is not God our greatest benefactor, and shall he have nothing but disdain from us for all his benefits? The psalmist cries out, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* But it is the language of our heart, *What ill turns shall we render to God for all his mercies unto us?* It is his *mercy we are not consumed*, and shall we spend this mercy upon our lusts? He was compassionate in sparing us, and shall we be ungrateful in hating him? It is the highest ingenuity.

(2.) God hath been *importunate* in intreaties of us. God offers not only truce, but a peace, and hath been

most active in urging a reconciliation. Can he manifest his willingness in clearer methods, than that of sending his Son to reconcile the world to himself? Can he evidence more sincerity than by his repeated and reiterated pressing of our souls to the acceptance of him? God knocks at our hearts, and we are deaf to him; he thunders in our ears, and we regard him not; he waits upon us for our acceptance of his love, and we grow more mad against him; he beseecheth us, and we ungratefully and proudly reject him; he opens his bosom, and we turn our backs; he offers us his pearls, and we tread them under our feet; he would clothe us with pure linen, but we would still wear our foul rags; he would give us angels' bread, and we feed on husks with swine. The wisdom of God shines upon us, and we account it foolishness. The infinite kindness of God courts us, and we refuse it, as if it were the greatest cruelty. Christ calls and begs, and we will not hear him either commanding or entreating. To love God is our privilege, and though it be our indispensable duty, yet it had been a presumption in us to aspire so high as to think the casting our earthly affections upon so transcendent an object should be dear to him, had he not authorised it by his command, and encouraged it by his acceptance. But it is strange that God should court us by such varieties of kindness, to that, wherein not his happiness, but our affection does consist; and much stranger, that such pieces of earth and clay should turn their backs upon so adorable an object, and be enemies to him, who displays himself in so many allurements to their souls, and fix their hatred upon that tender God who sues for their affections.

Consider that God is our superior. An inferior should seek to a superior, not a superior to one below him. There is an equality between man and man, but an infinite inequality between God and us. God is also the party wronged, and yet offers a parley. And consider further that when he could as well damn

us, as court us ; he wants not power to rid his hands of us, but he would rather show his almightiness in the triumph of his mercy, than the trophies of his justice ; he had rather be a refreshing light, than a consuming fire.

2. This enmity to God is *the greatest folly and madness*. The scripture tells us, that sin is folly and madness ; and certainly had man a clear prospect of this truth, which in his first apostacy he fell from, so that he could examine all his speculations, desires, motions, and actions by that rule, they would appear to him to be acts of a crazy and frantic mind. Therefore, when upon our return to God we have but a glimpse of this truth, how much ashamed is man of the deformity of his actions from that rule ; as a man that has been mad, is of those pranks he played in his phrenzy, after he is brought to his right wits. Hence repentance, which is always accompanied with a shame, is called *μετάνοια*, a return to our right wits.

1. This enmity to God is in itself *irrational* ; because, (1.) God is the most *lovely object*. He hath in his own nature, as well as in his operations, the highest right to our love ; for the more of entity and being any thing hath, the more of perfection, and the more lovely it is in itself, the more to be beloved by us. Now God hath the most of being, because other beings were eminently contained in his immense essence, and produced by his infinite power, and were the manifestations of himself, and lines drawn from him, and by him ; and therefore he is the most amiable object, because the creature has nothing lovely but only what it hath from God, which is more eminently treasured up in him, and may in him be seen and enjoyed with a greater advantage. The creatures are but pictures, and can no more represent to the full the true amiableness of God, than a few colours, though never so well suited together, can the moral or intellectual loveliness of the soul of man. As God had all the ideas of his creatures in his mind, so

he had the virtues of them in his essence. Therefore to love any creature above God, and so to hate him, is the highest piece of unreasonableness.

(2.) God is the *chiefest good*, and the fountain of all goodness. It is unreasonable to look upon that which comes from the fountain of goodness, to be destructive to our true pleasure; yet men have such hard thoughts of religion and divine commands, as if they were designed for their utter ruin, when they are the effluxes of infinite goodness. All hatred doth arise from an apprehension of the inconsistency of the thing we hate, with something we esteem a part of our happiness; and sinners being possessed with the thoughts of the justice and holiness of God, as inconsistent with their darling sin, hate him for being of a nature so contrary to that which they love; whereas none of God's perfections are repugnant to our being, or well-being in themselves; for would we have a God unjust, what comfort could we then take in him? We hate him for being against that which is most against us. We hate him for hating of that which would destroy our souls, and embitter our beings to us to all eternity; we hate him for hating that which, if it were possible, would disquiet his felicity, and destroy his being. What an unreasonable thing is it, to quarrel with that law of God, which obligeth you to nothing but what conduceth to the benefit of your souls, and the order of the world? What doth it bound and restrain you from, but that which would bring destruction upon you? Is it not a greater advantage to be carried fettered to heaven, than to run at liberty to hell? Who but a madman would prefer the devil's before God's yoke, and be the captive of a helish tyrant, rather than the subject of a gracious soveraign? What an unreasonable thing is it to love any sin, a privation better than the best of beings? Can we expect to get as much advantage from him by being his enemies, as by being his friends, since he is of so merciful a disposition?

(3.) God cannot possibly do us wrong. All right hatred is from a real wrong, sense of wrong, or fear of wrong; either of those is an unjust imputation upon God, who cannot possibly do wrong to his creatures, because he cannot be unrighteous; *Is God unrighteous who takes vengeance, Rom. 3. 5. Μη γίνεσθε.* For God is so far from being injurious in the least to us, that he doth cast about, and contrive our happiness in his laws, more than we can ourselves, or are willing he should do for us. Men cannot, if they consult but the sparks of reason, but confess the reasonableness of God's commands, and be satisfied in the righteousness of the duties enjoined, and the profitableness of the counsels set out in the gospel, and must needs look upon the felicity promised to be excellent and desirable, and therefore cannot upon any reasonable account charge God with doing them any wrong. Or let me argue thus: either God hath wronged us, or not; if not, it is unreasonable to disaffect him; if he hath, why should we hate him, seeing if God could do any injustice, he would not have the being of a God? For if it were possible, as soon as ever he should cease to be just and righteous, he would cease to be God, and destroy his own nature; for as every man in doing an unjust act, is less than a man, and loses the end of his own reason; so God, by doing any injustice, would be less than a God. Nay our hating him as a judge, is highly irrational, because of his equity and righteousness in all his proceedings. And because it is our own act in forcing him to that by our evil practices, which he is not willing to do but according to his own righteous nature, and for the vindication of his holiness in his law, cannot but do upon our final impenitency, and persisting in our transgressions.

(4.) God cannot be *hurt by us*. It is a folly among men to show their enmity where they cannot hurt. What an unreasonable boldness is it for a man to think he can grapple with omnipotence, and enter the

lists with the fountain of all strength and power? What is thy enmity, but a small wriggling against God? What disadvantage can accrue to him by thy opposing him? Just as much as the moon receives by the dog's barking at it, which neither stands still, nor alters its course, nor is frightened at the noise. Foolish man! that will not discover an enmity against a superior, but rakes it up in the ashes, and muzzles his anger till he be able to bite; and yet proclaims a war openly against heaven, as if he were too strong for God, and God too weak for him. As the light of God's face is too dazzling to be seen, so the arm of his power is too mighty to be oppressed by us. His almightiness is above the reach of our potsherd strength, as his infiniteness is above the capacity of our purblind understandings. His happiness is too firm to be disturbed by us, as well as his essence too glorious to be comprehended. What force canst thou have to resist the presence of him, before whom the rocks melt, and the heavens at length will be shrivelled up as parchment by the last fire?

(5) But though thou canst not hurt God, yet thou dost mightily *wrong thyself*. Senseless sinner! God is out of thy gunshot; thy arrows are too short for that mark, but his are long enough for thee; thy shot will fall before it reach him, but his arrows will both reach thy heart, and stick in it. Hatred in the world is attended sometimes with outward advantage; but what gain canst thou expect by this enmity? What refreshment is there by thy endeavouring to dry up the fountain? What good by labouring to destroy the original of goodness itself? What harm is it to the sun to shoot up arrows against it? Do they pierce its light, or shatter any of the sparks of it? No, but they fall down upon the archer's head. The opposition of a wicked man against God is much like a man's running his head against a rock, to be revenged on it for splitting his ship; whereby he bruises not the rock, but dashes out his own brains, and pays his life for a

price of his folly. Poor man is like a potsherd, that justles with a rock, and bursts itself; and is not this the highest piece of madness? *Woe unto him that strives with his Maker; let the potsherd strive with the potshèrds of the earth, Isa. 45. 9.* Dost thou fight against the Rock of ages? It will rather blunt thy weapon than be hurt by thy arm; it will make thy sword fly back in pieces upon thy own face. Every wicked man is a greater enemy to himself than the devil is, and wrongs himself more than the devil can do; because he nourishes that sin in him which wars against his soul.

3. Consider *the misery of such a state.* Thou wilt be miserable with a witness; *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, 1 Cor. 16. 22.* Let all the curses in heaven and earth light upon him. Let the mercy, wisdom, power, strength of God appear against him; let him not have an advocate to make any plea for him. Angels, men, devils will all appear against such a person.

(1.) Thou canst not possibly *escape vengeance.* The Sodomites, whose sins had so long dared God's justice, might have better escaped than thou canst: but, alas; what force hath a puppy or worm in a lion's paw? Thou art no more in his hand than a fly between a giant's fingers. Go, foolish self-deluding creature, recollect thyself. Can such a bubble, dust, chaff, stubble, worse than nothing and vanity, wrestle with God? Ah, poor worm; wilt thou set thyself in a strutting array against omnipotency, far less in God's hands than a chicken new stripped of its shell in the talons of an eagle. Jacob, a holy man, wrestled with him upon a holy account, and broke his thigh; take heed in thy wrestling with him upon a sinful account, thou dost not break thy neck. If he be thy friend, none can hurt thee; but if thy enemy, none can relieve thee.

He is the best friend when men will love him, but as terrible an enemy as consuming fire, when men

will hate him. Thou must be subject to him whether thou wilt or no, there is no remedy; if submission to his mercy be not free, subjection to his justice must be forced. We must be under his power whether we will or no: we cannot wrest ourselves out of the compass of his arm; if we go down to hell, he is there; if we dive to the bottom of the deep, thence his hand will fetch us out. We always have been, are still, and for ever must be within the reach of his almighty power. Whither wilt thou go? Is there any garrison to defend thee? any sanctuary to secure thee? any champion to stand for thee? If all the angels in heaven, and devils in hell, should rouse up themselves to be thy protectors, thou wouldest be just as happy, as if thou hadst the shelter of the dust of the balance, or a drop of a bucket. Can we blind his eye that he should not see, or deafen his ear that he should not hear, or bind his arm that he should not strike? Can we remove his jealousy by increasing it? Can we mitigate everlasting burnings by adding oil to them? Can our sins stand out against his judgments, or our persons successfully combat with his wrath? Before any of those can be done, the Creator must descend into our impotency. What man will confess he is able to do any of those, and yet he will walk in a path of enmity? Wrath will come, though it be slow in coming; it is slow, but sure; the longer it is preparing, the bitterer it will be in enduring. Let all devils and sinners in the world join together, how soon is God able to overthrow them, and turn their Babel-fort to their own confusion, and bury them in the ruins of their own works! *Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished, Prov. 11. 21.* How would he fling them all into hell, as one of us can a bag of dust or sand into the sea?

(2.) Thou dost even *force God to destroy thee* for his own content, and as it were provoke him to damn thee for his own ease; if thou wilt not lay;

down thy arms, thou dost wrest wrath out of his hands; *hæc quieted my spirit, Zech. 6. 8.* He speaks of the angels which he had sent out against Babylon, those black horses which noted death and destruction; and those angels doing their work and duty, are said by himself to quiet his Spirit; so that God can have no rest in his own spirit but by thy submission or destruction. And the longer thou dost stand out, the more thou dost provoke God to take some course for the easing of himself; for punishment in another place he calls his ease. *I will ease me of my adversaries, Isa. 1. 24;* and the latter words explain it, *I will avenge me of my enemies.* Is not the honour of God concerned in his laws? and would he not make himself ridiculous to the sons of men, if he did not severely punish their violations of them?

(3.) God cannot save thee *without disturbing the happiness of those that love him, and are loved by him.* Thou wilt but make a disturbance in heaven by thy contrary disposition, and hinder that exact harmony; thy jarring principles could never agree with that comfort; thy enmity and division with that union; the repose of the saints would be disquieted, and their pleasure cooled: for if they cared not for thy company in the world when they had many relics of enmity in themselves, and an imperfect holiness, they can less endure it in heaven, where their holiness is fully ripe, and their hatred against impiety perfectly strong; and God will not bring thee thither with that cursed nature thou hast, to damp their joy, and spoil the order of heaven. A state of wrath must necessarily succeed a state of enmity: for heaven can never be a place suitable to you, it will be as little agreeable to you, as your being there will be to God.

(4.) Thou hast the *beginnings of hell* in thee already. Enmity is a hellish disposition. As the perfection of love in heaven is a part of heaven's happiness, so the perfection of enmity in hell is a part of the damned's misery. The sight of God in hea-

ven inflames love in saints, so the absence of God from hell enrageth enmity in the devils and damned spirits.

(5.) All thy enmity will certainly be *charged upon thee one day*. There is a time when all thy acts of enmity shall be set in order before thee. *I will set them in order before thee, Psal. 50. 21.* This is to be understood *more militari*, when sin shall be set in rank and file, in bloody array against thy soul. Or *more forensi*, when they shall be set in order as so many indictments for thy rebellion and treason. What sadness will seize upon thee at the last, when God shall fix upon thee out of the crowd, and point at thee: *But those my enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me, Luke 19. 27.* How solemnly will he execute every enemy at the last! they shall be brought out shackled one by one, and Christ will sit and behold it. Lo here is one of my enemies, I have found him out for all his fair hopes of escape. When men and angels shall say, *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; this is the man that set up other gods in his heart; that was such a fool as to think his pleasure, riches, strength, honour, to be his god. Ah, fool with a witness, to think that a god could be of thy own making!*

THE
CHIEF SINNERS
 OBJECTS OF THE
CHOICEST MERCY.

1 Tim. 1. 15.

THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL
 ACCEPTATION, THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE
 WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS, OF WHOM I AM CHIEF.

PART I.

THE CHIEF OF SINNERS SAVED.

*Invitations given to such—Scripture instances of sal-
 vation extended to such—Adam—Abraham—Manas-
 seh—Aggravations of Manasseh's sin—The descent of
 Christ according to the flesh—Objects of his attention
 when on earth—Mary Magdalen—The Canaan-
 itish woman—The commission he gave to his apostles
 —How illustrated—The operations of the Spirit in
 the salvation of the chief of sinners—Some out of the
 worst of families—Under some of the worst of
 vices—Great sins made subservient to conversion—
 Why the chief of sinners are chosen, and then left so
 long in sin—The insufficiency of nature to work salva-
 tion—Evidence of this—Man's subjection under sin
 —His love of sin.*

I. Obs. **T**HE salvation of sinners was the main
 design of Christ's coming into the world. II. God
 often makes the chiefest sinners objects of his choicest
 mercy.

For the last, that God doth so, Observe,

1. God hath formerly made *invitations* to such.
 See what a black generation they were, *Isa. 1.* by the
 scroll of their sins. They were rebels, and rebels
 against him that had nursed them. *I have nourished*

and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me, ver. 2. And in this respect worse than the beasts they were masters of; the stupid ox, and the dull ass, outstripped them in ingenuity. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider*, ver. 3. He calls upon heaven and earth to judge between them, ver. 2. He appeals to men and angels, as a jury to give their verdict, whether these people had not been the most disingenuous and ungrateful people in the world. Or if by heavens and earth be meant Magistrates and people, as in the prophetic style they are usually taken, God then appeals to themselves, to let their own natural consciences, and the common ingenuity their sins had left them, to judge between them. He comes to charge them, *laden with iniquity*, ver. 4. They had such great weights lying upon them, that they were not able to stir; or laden with it, as some crabtree is with sour fruit. They had sprouted from a wicked stock; they had corrupted one another by their society and example, as rotten apples putrify the sound ones that lie near them.

They had been incorrigible under judgments; God had used the rod again, and again; but being there was no reformation, he was even weary of whipping them any longer; *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more*, ver. 5. They were also so universally infected, that there was no sound part about them, but running sores all over, both head and heart were infected; corrupt notions in the one, and corrupt affections in the other. Or if you take it prophetically, head signifies the chief magistrate; heart, the judges; feet the common people. The fire, which had burnt their cities, had not consumed their lusts, and dried up their sins; *Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire, your land strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers*, ver. 7. And had it not been for a small remnant, they had been as bad as Sodom and

Gomorrah, ver. 9. Their services were polluted, vain, and an abomination to him, ver. 13. A trouble to him, his soul hated them, he was tired with them, ver. 14, for they came with their bloody murderous hands into God's presence.

Yet though he justly charged them with these horrid crimes, he gives them assurance of entertainment if they would return to him; *Come now, and let us reason together*, ver. 18. He would condescend to debate the case with them, when one would have thought he should have said, I'll have nothing to do with such a crew as they; God loves to discourse with men about this argument of pardon; and he loves that men should hear him speak concerning it. He would dispute them out of their sins, into good and right apprehensions of his mercy. So, *Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted*, Isa. 31. 6. Revolted, there is their sin; deeply, there's the aggravation of it; and being also children of Israel, a people of much mercy, and miracles, there's another aggravation; yet turn unto him against whom you have thus sinned. The great objection of a penitent is, I have sinned, and I know not whether God will receive me: consider, God knows thy sin better than thou dost, yet he kindly calls to thee, and promiseth thee as good a reception as if thou hadst never sinned.

So, *They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord*, Jer. 3. 1. Though thou hast been a common adulteress, and made all corners, every idol welcome, and been in league with many sins; yet upon thy return I'll own thee; and these are God's warrants for encouragement.

2. God hath given *examples* of it in scripture. Adam the ringleader of all rebellions of mankind in the world, had the promise of the seed of the woman to

break the serpent's head made to him ; and in the genealogy of Christ, is called the Son of God, *Luke 3. 38*, not only in respect of creation, for so the devil is the Son of God ; but in a nearer relation. Yet all that deluge of wickedness which has overflowed the world since the fall, sprung out of his loins. Nay, Abraham the father of the faithful, was probably an idolater in Ur of the Chaldees, and a worshipper of the sun, and fire, as his fathers were, *Jos. 24. 2*, yet God makes a particular covenant with this man, presents him with a richer act of grace than any in the world besides him had, even that the Messiah, the great Redeemer of the world, should come from his seed ; this man is set up as the pattern of faith to others, and his bosom seems to be a great receptacle of saints in glory, *Luke 16. 22, 23*. Israel's sins were as a thick cloud, yet this powerful sun did melt them ; *I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins, Isa. 44. 22*. A sullen gloomy morning often ends in a well-complexioned noon. Manasseh is an eminent example of this doctrine. His story, *2 Chron. 33*, represents him as a black devil, if all the aggravations of his sin be considered.

1. It was against *knowledge*. He had a pious education under a religious father ; an education usually leaves some tinctures and impressions of religion. No doubt but the instructions his father Hezekiah had taught him, and the exemplary holiness he had seen in him, were sometimes awakened in his memory, and recoiled upon his conscience.

2. His *place and station*, a king ; sins of kings are like their robes, more scarlet and crimson than the sins of a peasant. Their example usually infects their subjects. As they are not without their attendance in their progresses, and recreations, so neither in their vices and virtues.

3. Restoration of *idolatry*. Had he found the worship of the host of heaven derived to him by suc-

cession from his father, and the idols set up to his hand, the continuance of them had less of sin, because more of temptation; but he built again those high places and altars to idols after they had been broken down, ver. 3, and dashed in pieces that reformation his Father had completed.

4. *Affronting God to his very face.* He sets up his idols, as it were to nose God, and built altars in the house of the Lord, and in the two courts of his temple, whereof God had said he would have his name there for ever, ver. 4, 5, 7. He brought in all the stars of heaven to be sharers in that worship which was only due to the God of heaven. What could he find no other place for his idols, but in the very temple of God? must God be cast out of his house, to make room for Baal?

5. *Murder.* Perhaps of his children, which he caused to pass through the fire as an offering to his idol, ver. 6. It may be it was only for purification. But he had the guilt of much innocent blood upon him, the streams whereof ran down in every part of the city. *Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he filled Jerusalem with blood from one end to the other, 2 Kings 21. 16.*

6. *Covenant with the devil.* He used enchantments, and witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, ver. 6, yea, he had acquaintance with more devils than one, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards in the plural number.

7. *His other men's sins.* He did not only lead the people by his example, but compelled them by his commands. *So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen God had rooted out, 2 Chron. 33. 9, to make room for them. Hereby, he contracted the guilt of the whole nation upon himself.*

8. *Obstinacy against admonitions.* *God spake to him and his people, but they would not hearken, or alter their course, 2 Kings 21. 10.*

9. *Continuance* in it. He ascended the throne young, at twelve years old, ver. 1. It is uncertain how long he continued in this sin. Torriellus thinks fifteen years. Bellarmine twenty-seven. Kinchi fifty years, reckoning but five years of his life after his restoration. What a world of sin, and aggravations of it, were there in this man! and yet God was intreated, ver. 19.

3. The *stock whereof Christ came*, seems to intimate this; God might have kept the stock, whence Christ descended according to the flesh, pure, and free from being tainted with any notorious crimes; but we find sins of a crimson dye even among them. There are no women reckoned up in Christ's genealogy, but such as in scripture are noted for looseness, *Mat.* 1. 3. Tamar who played the harlot with Judah her father-in-law, *Gen.* 28. Rahab, ver. 5, the harlot of Jericho. *Ruth*, ver. 5, a Gentile, and a Moabitess; the root of whose generation was Lot's son by incest with his own daughter. Bathsheba, ver. 6, David's adulteress. He chose these repenting sinners, out of whose loins Christ was to come, that the greatest sinners might not be afraid to come to him.

Was David, whose son our Saviour is called, much better? It is true, he was a man after God's own heart, but yet very notorious for that act of murder and adultery, and with more aggravating circumstances than usually are met with in acts of the like nature, *2 Sam.* 11. Uriah was a godly man, and had a sense of the condition of the church and nation whereof he was a member, ver. 11, and such a man's bed David is not only content to defile, but he pollutes his soul with drunkenness, ver. 13, lays snares for his life, not in a manly, but sly and treacherous manner; for while he doth caress him, and show him a fair countenance in his palace, he draws up secret instructions to Joab so to order the business, that Uriah might be thrust into his grave, and makes him the post to carry

the commission for his own death, ver. 15. 16. After all this he hath no remorse when he hears of the loss of so godly and valiant a man, but wipes his mouth, and sweeps all the dirt to the door of Providence, ver. 25. Now Christ's stock being thus tainted, was methinks an evidence that penitents though before of the greatest pollutions, might be welcome to him. And that as he picked out such out of whose loins to proceed, so he would pick out such also in whose hearts to reside.

4. It was Christ's employment in the world to court and gain such kind of creatures. The first thing he did, while in the manger, was to snatch some of the devil's prophets out of his service, and take them into his own, *Mat.* 2. 1, some of the Magi, who were astrologers and idolaters. When he fled from Herod's cruelty, he chose Egypt, the most idolatrous country in the world, for his sanctuary; a place where the people worshipped oxen, crocodiles, cats, garlic, *putida numina*, all kind of riff-raff, to show that he often comes to sojourn in the blackest souls. The first people he took care to preach to, were the seamen, who usually are the rudest; and most debauched sort of men, as gaining the vices, as well as the commodities of those nations they traffic with, *Mat.* 4. 13. The inhabitants of those sea-coasts are said to sit in darkness, ver. 16, in darkness both of sin and ignorance, just as the Egyptians were not able to stir in that thick darkness, which was sent as a plague upon them. And the country, by reason of the vices of the inhabitants, is called the region and shadow of death; a title properly belonging to hell itself. To call sinners to repentance, was the errand of his coming. And he usually delighted to chuse such that had not the least pretence to merit, *Mark* 2. 17. Matthew a publican, Zaccheus an extortioner, store of that generation of men and harlots, and very little company besides.

He chose his attendants out of the devil's rabble;

and he was more Jesus, a Saviour, among this sort of trash, than among all other sorts of people, for all his design was to get clients out of hell itself. What was that woman that he must needs go out of his way to convert? a harlot, *John* 4. 18, an idolater, for the Samaritans had a mixed worship, a linsey-woolsey religion, and upon that account were hateful to the Jews. She continued in her adultery at the very time Christ spake to her, yet he makes her a monument of his grace; and not only so, but the first preacher of the gospel to her neighbours; *Is not this the Christ?* ver. 29, and an instrument to conduct them to him, *Come, see a man which told me all things*, &c. Was any more defiled than Mary Magdalen? seven devils would make her sooty to purpose, and so many did Christ cast out of her; *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalen*, *Mark* 16. 9; out of whom he cast seven devils. This lustful devil he turns into a weeping saint.

What was that Canaanitish woman, who had so powerful a faith infused? One sprung of a cursed stock, hateful to God, rooted out of the pleasant land, a dog, not a child; she comes a dog, but returns a child; Christ made this crab in a wilderness to bring forth fruit, even the best that heaven could afford; viz. the fruit of faith; and larger and better bunches of it, than at that time sprouted out of any branches of the Jewish vine, so well planted, and so often watered by Christ himself. When he comes to act his last part in the world, he saves a thief, who was got to hell-gates, ready to be pushed in by the devil. Do you find examples among the pharisees? No; dunginill-sinners take heaven by violence, while the proud pharisees lose it by their own righteousness. Scribes and doctors continue devils in the chair, while harlots commence saints from the stews, and the thief proceeds a convert on the cross.

Since there was but one that in his own person

he converted, after he went to heaven, what was he? One that had *breathed out slaughters and threatenings against the church, Acts 9. 1.* To do so, was as common with him, and natural to him, as to suck in air, and breathe it out again: this man galloping to hell as fast as his mad rage and passion could carry him, he stops in his career, ordains a preacher of a persecutor; gives him as large a commission, as he had given any of his favourites; for he makes him the chiefest apostle of the gentiles. What bogs and miry places did Christ drain, and make fruitful gardens? What barren and thorny wildernesses did he change into pleasant paradises? He made subjects of vengeance objects of mercy: he told the women of Samaria, who lived in fornication, that he was the Messiah, *The woman saith to him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, am he, John 4. 25;* which he never discovered to the self-righteous pharisees, nor indeed in so many words to his disciples, till Peter's confession of him.

5. The *commission* Christ gave to his apostles, was to this purpose. He bids them proclaim the promise free to all, *Go ye into all the world, Mark 16. 15,* and preach the gospel to *every creature.* All the world, *every creature.* He put no difference between men in this respect, though you meet with them in the likeness of beasts, and devils, never so wicked, never so abominable; as long as they are creatures, reach out the cup of salvation to them, if they will drink, open the treasures of grace to them, if they will receive them; indent with them for nothing but faith for justification, and profession of it for their salvation.

This commission is set out by the parable of a king, commanding his servants to fetch the maimed, halt, and blind, with their wounds, sores, and infirmities about them, *Luke 14. 21, 23.* Bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

Yea, and go out into the highways, and hedges, and those loathsome persons, those dregs of mankind, which you shall find swarming with vermin, and cleansing themselves under every hedge, bring them in ; if they pretend their rags and nastiness as unsuitable to my rank and quality, compel them, force them against their own natural inclinations and doubts, that my house may be filled. God will have heaven filled with such, when self-righteous persons refuse him. When you come to heaven, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you will find some, and a great many, that were once as filthy morally, as these hedge-birds were naturally, who had once as many lusts creeping about them, as there were frogs in Egypt. Such a compulsion as this spoken of, there was in the primitive times by the power of the Spirit of grace.* Two stage-players, that in their acting scoffed at the christian religion, were converted, and proved martyrs ; one under Dioclesian, the other under Julian.

6. The practice of the Spirit *after Christ's ascension*, to lay hold of such persons.

1. Some out of the *worst families* in the world : one out of Herod's, *Acts 13. 1.* Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets, and teachers, as Barnabas ; and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene ; and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. Either Herod Antipas, who derided Christ before Pilate ; or Herod Agrippa, who put James to death ; which of these Herods it was, it was not likely that in such a family he should suck in any principles advantageous to the christian religion : for being brought up with him, he was either his playfellow when young ; or his confidant when grown up ; yet out of this family of this wicked prince he calls out one, to make not only an object of his mercy, but an instrument of it to others, contrary to the force of education, which usually roots bad principles deep in

* Grot. in Luke 14: 25.

the heart. It is likely to this intent the Holy Ghost takes particular notice of the place of Manaen's education, when the families, where the rest named with him were bred up, are not mentioned: some rude and rough stones were taken out of Nero's palace; some that were servants to the most abominable tyrant, and the greatest monster of mankind; one that set Rome on fire, and played on his harp while the flames were crackling about the city; ripped up his mother's belly to see the place where he lay; would any of the civiller sort of mankind be attendants upon such a devil? Yet some of this monster's servants became saints. *Phil. 4. 22.* All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household: to hear of saints in Nero's family, is as great a prodigy, as to hear of saints in hell. God before had promised his grace to Egypt, the most idolatrous country; there God would have an altar erected: *In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; in that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt. Isa. 19. 18, 19, 20.* And indeed the gospel was famous in Egypt, both at the christian school at Alexandria, and for many famous lights.

2. Some of the *worst vices.* The Ephesians were as bad as any, such that Paul calls darkness itself; *For ye were sometimes darkness: Eph. 5. 8.* There was not only an eclipse, or a dark mask upon them, but they were changed into the very nature of night. Great idolaters; the temple of Diana, adored and resorted to by all Asia, and the whole world, was in that city, *Acts 19. 27.* That the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, *whom all Asia, and the world worshippeth.* And they cry up this statue they pretended fell down from Jupiter, above Christ, who was preached by Paul.* They were given to magic, and other diabolical arts; yet many of these were

* Plin. lib. 5. cap. 36.

weaned from their idol, and their magic, and of darkness were made light in the Lord; which is more than if you saw a black piece of pitch changed into a clear piece of crystal, or a stone ascend into the nature of a glittering star.

Take a view of another corporation at Corinth of as filthy persons as ever you heard of, *such were some of you.* 1 Cor. 6. 11. After he had drawn out a catalogue of their sins against the light of nature, and made the enumeration so perfect, that very little can be added, he adds, *such were some of you.* Not all, but some. *But you are washed, &c.* Not *τοῖς ἁμαρτίαις*, such sinners; but *ταῦτα*, such sins. Persons not only committing some few acts of them, but so habituated in them, that they seemed metamorphosed into the very nature of these sins themselves; so that they were become the very dirt, mud, and rubbish of hell. Yet you see devils he really turned into angels of light. Well then, how many flinty rocks has God dissolved into a stream of tears? How many hard hearts has he made to bleed, and melt? That which is now pure gold, has been earthy and polluted.

I shall only add this to the whole: Great sins are made *preparations* by God to some men's conversion, not in their own nature, that is impossible: but by the wise disposal of God, which Mr. Burges illustrates thus; as a child whose coat is but a little dirty, has it not presently washed; but when he comes to fall over head and ears in the mire, it is taken off, and washed immediately; the child might have gone many a day with a little dirt, had not such an accident happened. Peter might have had his proud and vain-glorious humour still, had he not fallen so foully in the denial of his master; but when he fell into the jakes, and puddle, it promotes his conversion: for so Christ calls it, *And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren, Luke 22. 32*; it was conversion in a new edition; and you do not find him in the same boasting vanity again.

David's falling into the sin of murder and adultery, is the occasion of the ransacking his soul; which you find him not so hot about another time: he digs all about to the very root. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me, Psal. 51. 5.* This sin had stirred and raked up all the mud in his heart, and made him see himself an abominable creature; therefore, he desires God to *hide his face from his sins*, ver. 9; he was so loathsome, he would not have any one look upon him; (fling all this mud out of my soul,) and prays more earnestly for a new heart, and a right spirit. So when a wicked man falls into some grievous sin, which his conscience frowns upon him, and lashes him for, he looks out for a shelter, which in all his peaceable wickedness he never did.

2. Why God *chuses the greatest sinners*, and lets his elect run on so far in sin before he turns them.

1. There is a *passive disposition* in the greatest sinners, more than in moral or superstitious men, to see their need: because they have not any self-righteousness to boast of. Man's blameless outward carriage and freedom from the common sins of the times and places wherein they live, many times proves a snare of death to them; and makes them more cold and faint towards Christ: because they possess themselves with imaginations, that Christ cannot but look upon them, though they never so much as set their faces toward him. And because they are not drenched in such villanies as others are, their consciences sit quiet under this moral carriage, and gall them not by any self-reflections: therefore when the threatenings of the law are denounced against such and such sins, these men wipe their mouths, being untainted from those sins that are thus cursed, and vainly glory in their gay and gaudy plumes, and bless God with the pharisee, that they are not sinners of such a scarlet dye, and that they do such and such duties, and so go on without seeing a necessity of the new birth;

and by this means the strength of sin is more compacted and condensed in them.

Superstitious and formal men are hardly reduced to their right wits: partly because of a defect in reason from whence those extravagances arise; and partly because those false habits and spirit of error possessing their faculties, they are incapable of more generous impressions: besides, they are more tenacious of the opinions they have sucked in, which have got the empire and command over their souls; such misguided zeal fortifies men against proposals of grace, and fastens them in a more obstinate inflexibility to any converting motions. This self-righteous temper is like an external heat got into the body, which produceth an hectic fever, and is not easily perceived till it be incurable; and naturally it is a harder matter to part with self-righteousness, than to part with gross sins: for that is more deeply rooted upon the stock of self-love, a principle which departs not from us without our very nature: it hath more arguments to plead for it; it hath a natural conscience, a patron of it. Whereas a great sinner stands speechless at reproofs, and a faithful monitor has a good second and correspondent of natural conscience within a man's own breast. It was not the gross sins of the Jews against the light of nature, so much as the establishing the idol of their own righteousness, that was the block to hinder them from submitting to the righteousness of God, *Rom.* 10. 3.

Christ came to his own, and his own received him not, *John* 1. 11. Those that seem to have his peculiar stamp and mark upon them, that had their heads in heaven by some kind of resemblance to God in moral righteousness, being undefiled with the common pollutions of the world: these received him not, when publicans and harlots got the start of them, and run before them, to catch hold of the tenders of grace. *Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you, Matt.* 21. 31. Just as travellers

that have loitered away their time in an alehouse, being sensible how the darkness of the night creeps upon them, spur on, and outstrip those that were many miles on their way, and get to their stage before them. So these publicans and harlots which were at a great distance from heaven, arrived there before those who, like the young man, were not far off from it.

Great sinners are most easily convinced of the notorious wickedness of their lives; and reflecting upon themselves because of their horrid crimes against the light of nature, are more inclinable to endeavour an escape from the devil's slavery, and are frightened and shaken by their consciences into a compliance with the doctrine of redemption; whereas those that do by nature the things contained in the law, are so much a law to themselves, that it is difficult to persuade them of the necessity of conforming to another law, and to part with this self-law in matter of justification. As metals of the noblest substance are hardest to be polished; so men of the most generous, natural, and moral endowments are with more difficulty argued into a state of christianity, than those of more drossy conversations. Cassianus speaks very peremptorily in this case; *frequenter vidimus de frigidis & carnalibus ad spiritualem venisse fervorem de lepidis & animalibus nunquam.*

2. To shew the *insufficiency* of nature to such a work as conversion is, that men may not fall down, and idolize their own wit and power. A change from acts of sin to moral duties, may be done by a natural strength, and the prevalency of natural conscience: for the very same motives which led to sin, as education, interest, profit, may upon a change of circumstances, guide men to an outward morality; but a change to the contrary grace is supernatural.

Two things are certain in nature. (1.) Natural inclinations never change, but by *some superior virtue*. A loadstone will not cease to draw iron, while that

attractive quality remains in it. The wolf can never love the lamb, nor the lamb the wolf; nothing but must act suitably to its nature. Water cannot but moisten, fire cannot but burn. So likewise the corrupt nature of man being possessed with an invincible contrariety and enmity to God, will never suffer him to comply with God. And the inclinations of a sinner to sin being more strengthened by the frequency of sinful acts, have as great a power over him, and as natural to him, as any qualities are to natural agents: and being stronger than any sympathies in the world, cannot by a man's own power, or the power of any other nature equal to it, be turned into a contrary channel.

(2.) Nothing can act *beyond its own principle and nature*. Nothing in the world can raise itself to a higher rank of being, than that which nature hath placed it in; a spark cannot make itself a star, though it mount a little up to heaven; nor a plant endue itself with sense, nor a beast adorn itself with reason; nor a man make himself an angel. Thorns cannot bring forth grapes, nor thistles produce figs; because such fruits are above the nature of those plants. So neither can our corrupt nature bring forth grace, which is a fruit above it. *Effectus non excedit virtutem suæ causæ*: grace is more excellent than nature, therefore cannot be the fruit of nature. It is Christ's conclusion, *How can you being evil, speak good things?* *Matt. 12. 33, 34.* Not so much as the buds and blossoms of words, much less the fruit of actions. They can no more change their natures, than a viper can cashier his poison. Now though this I have said be true, yet there is nothing man does more affect in the world than a self-sufficiency, and an independency upon any other power but his own. This temper is as much riveted in his nature, as any other false principle whatsoever: for man does derive it from his first parents, as the prime legacy bequeathed to his nature: for it was the first thing discovered in

man at his fall; he would be as God, independent upon him. Now God, to cross this principle, suffers his elect, like Lazarus, to lie in the grave, till they stink, that there may be no excuse to ascribe their resurrection to their own power. If a putrified rotten carcass should be brought to life, it could never be thought that it inspired itself with that active principle. God lets men run on so far in sin, that they do unman themselves, that he may proclaim to all the world, that we are unable to do any thing of ourselves at first towards our recovery, without a superior principle. The evidence of which will appear if we consider,

1. Man's *subjection* under sin. He is sold under sin, *Rom. 7. 14*, and brought into captivity to the law of sin, ver. 23, *law of sin*, that sin seems to have a legal authority over him; and man is not only a slave to one sin, but divers, *Tit. 1. 3*, *serving divers lusts*. Now when a man is sold under the power of a thousand lusts, every one of which hath an absolute tyranny over him, and rules him as a sovereign by a law; when a man is thus bound by a thousand laws, a thousand cords and fetters, and carried whither his lords please, against the dictates of his own conscience, and force of natural light; can any man imagine, that his own power can rescue him from the strength of these masters that claim such a right to him, and keep such a force upon him, and have so often baffled his own strength, when he offered to turn head against them?

2. Man's *affection* to them. He doth not only serve them, but he serves them, and every one of them, with *delight and pleasure*, *Tit. 3. 3*. They were all pleasures, as well as lusts; friends as well as lords. Will any man leave his voluptuousness, and such sins that please and flatter his flesh? Will a man ever endeavour to run away from those lords which he serves with affection? having as much delight in being bound a slave to these lusts, as the devil

hath in binding him. Therefore when you see a man cast away his pleasures, deprive himself of those contentments to which his soul was once knit, and walk in paths contrary to corrupt nature, you may search for the cause any where, rather than in nature itself. No piece of dirty muddy clay can form itself into a neat and handsome vessel; no plain piece of timber can fit itself for the building, much less a crooked one. Nor a man that is born blind, give himself eyes.

God deals with men in this case, as he did with Abraham. He would not give Isaac, while Sarah's womb, in a natural probability, might have borne him; but when her womb was dead, and age had taken away all natural strength of conception, then God gives him; that it might appear, that he was not a child of nature, but a child of promise. I have been the larger on these two heads (which I design rather as things premised, than reasons) because these two principles of common honesty, and self-sufficiency, are the great impediments to conversion, and natural to most men.

PART II.

GOD'S REGARD FOR HIS OWN GLORY.

For the glory of his patience—Of his grace—Of its fullness—Its freeness—Its extent—Its compassion—The pleasure of it—The glory of his power—Conversion a greater work than creation—Called a resurrection—His power draws sinners to Christ—Glory of his wisdom—In the objects of his choice—In the time of conversion—Instanced in the conversion of Saul—Wisdom in maintaining the credit of the death of Christ—The value of his sacrifice—The virtue of it—Abounding of grace—God saves the chief of sinners for his own glory.

1. **T**HE glory of his *patience*. We wonder when we see a notorious sinner, how God can let his thunders lie still by him, and his sword rust in his sheath. And indeed when such are converted, they wonder themselves, that God did not draw his sword out, and pierce their bowels, or shoot one of his arrows into their hearts all this while. But God by such a forbearance shews himself to be God indeed, and something in this act infinitely above such a weak creature as man is; *I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man, Hosea, 11. 9.* When God had reckoned up their sins before, and they might have expected the sen-

tence, after the reading the charge ; God tells them, he would not destroy them, he would not execute them, because he was God. If he were not a God, he could not keep himself from pouring out a just vengeance upon them. If a man did inherit all the meekness of all the angels and all the men that ever were in the world, he could not be able to bear with patience the extravagancies and injuries done in the world, the space of one day ; for none but a God, i. e. one infinitely long-suffering, can bear with them.

Not a sin passed in the world before the coming of Christ in the flesh, but was a commendatory letter of God's forbearance, *To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, Rom. 3. 25.* And not a sin passed before the coming of Christ into the soul, but gives the same testimony, and bears the same record. And the greater number of sins, and great sins are passed, the more trophies there are erected to God's long-suffering ; the reason why the grace of the gospel appeared so late in the world, was to testify God's patience. Our apostle takes notice of this long suffering towards himself in bearing with a such a persecutor ; *Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me, first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him, 1 Tim. 1. 16.* This was Christ's end in letting him run so far, that he might shew forth not a few mites, grains, or ounces of patience ; but all long-suffering, long-suffering without measure, or weight, by wholesale ; and this as a pattern to all the ages of the world ; *ἵποτυπωσις*, for a type ; a type is but a shadow in respect of the substance. To show, that all the ages of the world should not waste that patience, whereof he had then manifested but a pattern. A pattern we know is less than the whole piece of cloth, from whence it is cut. And as an essay is but a short taste of a man's skill, and doth not discover all his art ; as the first miracle Christ

wrought, of turning water into wine, as a sample of what power he had, was less than those miracles which succeeded ; and the first miracle God wrought in Egypt, in turning Aaron's rod into a serpent, was but a sample of his power which would produce greater wonders ; so this patience to Paul was but a little essay of his meekness, a little patience cut off from the whole piece, which should always be dealing out to some sinners or other ; and would never be cut wholly out till the world had left being. This sample or pattern was but of the extent of a few years ; for Paul was but young, the scripture terms him a young man, *Acts* 7. 58, * about thirty-six years of age, yet he calls it all long-suffering. Ah Paul ! some since have experienced more of this patience, in some it has reached not only to thirty, but forty, fifty, or sixty years.

2. *Grace.* It is partly for the admiration of this grace, that God intends the day of judgment. It is a strange place ; *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day,* *2 Thess.* 1. 10. What, has not Christ glory enough in heaven with his Father ? Will he come on purpose to seek glory from such worthless creatures as his saints are ? What is that which glorifies Christ in them ? It is the gracious work he has wrought in them. For the word is, *ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν ἁγίοις*, to be *inglorified in his saints*, i. e. by something within them ; for which they glorify Christ *active and objective* ; as the creatures glorify the wisdom and power of God, by affording matter to men to do so ; so does the work of God in saints afford matter of praise to angels, and admiration to devils. The apostle useth two words, *glorified*, that is the work of angels and saints, who shall sing out his praises for it. As a prince after a great conquest receives the congratulations of all his nobility. *Admired* ; that

* Sanctius in locum.

the very devil and damned shall do ; for though their malice and condition will not suffer them to praise him, yet his inexpressible love in making such black insides so beautiful, shall astonish them.

In this sense those things under the earth shall bow down to that name of Jesus, a Saviour. A name which God gave him at first ; *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, Phil. 2. 9, 10.* And upon his exaltation did confirm, *Heb. 5. 9*, when he was *made perfect*, i. e. exalted, he became the author of eternal salvation, and had the power of saving, as well as the name conferred upon him. They shall confess that he is Lord, *Phil. 2. 11.* i. e. that he acted like a Lord, when he prevailed over all the opposition which those great sinners made against him. The whole trial of the saints, and the sentence of their blessedness, shall be finished before that of the damned, *Matt. 25. 35. 44.* That the whole scene of his love, and the wonders of the work of faith being laid open, might strike them with a vast amazement. And that this is the design of Christ, to be thus glorified in his grace and power, appears by the apostle's prayer, ver. 11, 12, that the Thessalonians might be in the number of those Christ should be thus glorified in. Therefore he prays, that God would *fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness*; i. e. that grace he so pleased and delighted to manifest, and carry on the work of faith with power ; that *the name of Christ might be glorified in them*, as well as in the rest of his saints. Ordinary conversion is an act of grace ; Barnabas so interprets it, *Acts 11. 21, 23*, when a great number believed ; what abundance of grace then is expended in converting a company of extraordinary sinners !

It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence, *Prov. 19. 11*, i. e. it is a manifestation of a property which is an honour to him to be known to have. If it be thus an honour to pass by an offence simply, then the

greater the offence is, and the more the offences are which he passeth by, the greater must the glory needs be; because it is a manifestation of such a quality in greater strength and vigour. So it must argue a more exceeding grace in God to remit many and great sins in man, than to forgive only some few, and lesser offences.

1. *Fulness* of his grace. He shews hereby, that there is more grace in him, than there can be sin in us, or the whole world. He lets some sinners run mightily upon his score, to manifest, that though they are beggared, yet his grace is not. That though they have spent all their stock upon their swinish lusts, yet they have not drained his treasures: no more than the sun is emptied of its strength, by exhaling the ill vapours of so many dunghills. This was his design in giving the moral law, *finis operis*, that is, the event of the law was to increase the sin; but *finis operantis*, was thereby to glorify his grace; Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, *Rom. 5. 20*. When the law of nature was out of print, and so blurred that it could scarce be read, God brings the moral law (the counterpart of the law of nature) in a new edition into the world; and thereby sin hath new aggravations, as being rebellion against a clearer light, a swelling, and breaking over this mighty bank of the law laid in its way. But this was serviceable to the fulness of his grace, which had more abundant matter hereby to work upon, and a larger field to sow its inexhaustible seed in, *υπερπερισσευσαι*, it did superabound. That grace should rise in its tide higher than sin, and bear it down before it; just as the rolling tide of the sea riseth higher than the streams of the river, and beats them back with all their mud and filth. It was mercy in God to create us; it is abundant mercy to make any new creatures, after they had forfeited their happiness, 1 *Pet. 1. 3*. which according to his abundant mercy, *κατὰ τὸ πολὺ*,

according to his much mercy. But it was *ἵπερ πλεονέχουσα χάρις*, overflowing exceeding abundant, more than full grace to make such deformed creatures new creatures, ver, 14. of this chapter.

2. *Freeness of grace.* None can entertain an imagination, that Christ should be a debtor to sin, unless in vengeance, much less a debtor to the worst of sinners. But if Christ should only take persons of moral and natural excellencies, men might suspect that Christ were some way or other engaged to them, and that the gift of salvation were limited to the endowments of nature, and the good exercise and use of a man's own will. But when he puts no difference between persons of the least, and those of the greatest demerit, but affecting the foulest monsters of sin, as well as the fairest of nature's children, he builds triumphal arches to his grace upon this rubbish, and makes men and angels admiringly gaze upon these infinitely free compassions; when he takes souls full of disease and misery into his arms. For it is manifest hereby, that the God and Lord of nature is no more bound to his servant, (as touching the gift of salvation) when she carries it the most smoothly with him, than when she rebels against him with the highest hand. And that Christ is at perfect liberty from any conditions, but that of his own, viz. faith; and that he can and will embrace the dirt and mud, as well as the beauty and varnish of nature, if they believe with the like precious faith.

Therefore it is frequently God's method in scripture, just before the offer of pardon, to sum up the sinner's debts, with their aggravations; to convince them of their insolvency to satisfy so large a score, and also to manifest the freeness and vastness of his grace; *But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel; Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offering, &c. but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities, Isa. 43. 22, 23, 24.*

When he had told them how dirtily they had dealt with him, and would have made him a very slave to their corrupt humours; at the conclusion, when they, nor no creature else, but would have expected fireballs of wrath to be flung in their faces, and that God should have dipped his pen in gall, and have writ their mittimus to hell, he dips it in honey, and crosses the debt; *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*, ver. 25. Could there be any thing of merit here, when the criminal instead of favour could expect nothing but severity, there being nothing but demerit in him?

It is so free, that the mercy we abuse, the name we have profaned, the name, of which we have deserved wrath, opens its mouth with pleas for us: *But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen whither they went*, *Ezek.* 36. 21. Not for their sakes. It should be wholly free: for he repeats their profaning of his name four times. This name he would sanctify, i. e. glorify. How? *In cleansing them from their filthiness*, ver. 25. His name, while it pleads for them, mentions their demerits, that grace might appear to be grace indeed; and triumph in its own freeness. Our sins against him cannot deserve more than our sufferings for him; and even they are not worthy of the glory which shall be revealed, *Rom.* 8. 18.

3. *Extent* of his grace. The mercy of God is called his riches, and exceeding riches of grace. Now as there is no end of his holiness, which is his honour; neither any limits set to his power: so there is no end of his grace, which is his wealth; no end of his mines; therefore the foulest and greatest sinners are the fittest for Christ to manifest the abundant riches of his graces upon; for it must needs argue a more vast estate to remit great debts, and many thousands of talents, than to forgive some fewer shillings, or pence; than to pardon some smaller sins in men of a

more unstained conversation. If it were not for turning and pardoning mountainous sinners, we should not know so much of God's estate. We should not know how rich he were, or what he were worth. He pardons iniquities for his name's sake : and who can spell all the letters of his name, and turn over all the leaves in the book of mercy ? who shall say to his grace, as he does to the sea, hitherto shalt thou go, and no further ?

As the heavens are of a vast extension, which like a great circle encompass the earth, which lies in the middle like a little atom, in comparison of that vast body of air and æther ; so are our sins to the extent of God's mercy ; *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts, Isa. 55. 9.* Men's sins are innumerable, yet they are but cyphers to the vast sums of grace which are every day expended ; because they are finite, but mercy is infinite ; so that all sins in the world put together, cannot be of so large an extent as mercy ; because being every one of them finite, if all laid together cannot amount to infinite.

The gospel is intitled *good will to men* ; to all sorts of men ; with iniquities, transgressions, and sins, of all sorts and sizes. God hath stores of mercy lying by him. His exchequer is never empty ; Keeps *mercy for thousands, Exod. 34. 7,* in a readiness to deal it upon thousand millions of sins, as well as millions of persons. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all that were before, have not wasted it : and if God were to proclaim his name again, it is the same still, for his name as well as his essence is unchangeable. His grace is no more tied to one sin, than it is to one person : he has mercy on whom he will, and his grace can pardon what sins he will ; therefore he tells them, *Isa. 55. 7,* that he would multiply pardons ; he will have mercy to suit every sin of thine, and a salve for every sore : though thy sin has its heights, and depths, yet he will heap mercy upon mercy, till he makes it

to overtop thy sin. He will be as good at his merciful arithmetic, as thou hast been at thy sinful, if thou dost sincerely repent and reform. Though thou multiply thy sins by thousands, where repentance goes before, remission of sin follows without limitation; when Christ gives the one, he is sure to second it with the other. Though aggravating circumstances be never so many, yet he will multiply his mercies as fast as thou canst the sins thou hast committed.

He hath a cleansing virtue, and a pardoning grace, for all iniquities and transgressions, *And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me: and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. Jer. 33. 8.* It is three times repeated, to shew that his mercy should be as large as their sin, though there was not a more sinful nation upon the earth than they were. His justifying and sanctifying grace should have as vast an extension; for he would both pardon and cleanse them. Why? ver. 9. That it might be a *name of joy and praise; and an honour* to him before all the nations of the earth.

It is so great, that self-righteous persons murmur at it, that such swines should be preferred before them. As the eldest son was angry that his father should lavish out his kindness upon the prodigal, more than upon himself, *Luke 15. 28.*

4. *Compassion* of his grace. The formal nature of mercy is tenderness, and the natural effect of it is relief. The more miserable the object, the more compassionate human mercy is, and the more forward to assist. Now that mercy which in man is a quality, in God is a nature. How would the infinite tenderness of his nature be discovered, if there were no objects to draw it forth? It would not be known to be mercy, unless it were shed abroad; nor to be tender mercy, unless it relieved great and oppressing miseries. For mercy is a quality in man

that cannot keep at home, and be stowed under a lock and key in a man's own breast. Much less in God, in whom it is a nature. Now the greater the disease, the greater is that compassion discovered to be, wherewith God is so fully stored.

As his end in letting the devil pour out so many afflictions upon Job, was to shew his pity and tender mercy in relieving him; *You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy, James 5. 11:* so in permitting the devil to draw his elect to so many sins, it is the same end he drives at. And he is more pitiful, to help men under sin, than under affliction; because the guilt of one sin is a greater misery than the burden of a thousand crosses. If forgiveness be a part of tenderness in man, it is also so in God, who is set, *Eph. 4. 32*, as a pattern of the compassion we are to shew to others. *And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* The lower a man is brought, the more tender is that mercy that relieves him; *Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low, Psal. 79. 8.* To visit them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to pardon their sins, is called mercy with this epithet of tender; *Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day spring from on high hath visited us, Luke 1. 77, 78, 79.* And so it is indeed, when he visits the most forlorn sinners.

5. *Sincerity and pleasure* of his grace. Ordinary pardon proceeds from his delight in mercy; *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy, Mic. 7. 18.* Therefore the more of his grace he lays out upon any one, the more excess of delight he hath in it; because it is a larger effect of that grace. If he were not sincere in it, he would never mention men's sins, which would scare them

from him, rather than allure them to him. If he were not sincere, he would never change the heart of an enemy, and shew kindness to him in the very act of enmity; for the first act of grace upon us is quite against our wills. And man is so far from being active in it, that he is contrary to it. *In primo actionis*, it is thus with a man, though not *in primo actu*; for in the first act of conversion, man is willing, though not in the first moment of that act. But for God to bestow his grace upon us against our wills, and when he can expect no suitable recompence from us, evidences the purity of his affection; that when he endured so many contradictions of sinners against himself, day by day, yet he is resolved to have them, and does seize upon them, though they struggle and fly in his face, and provoke him to fling them off.

It is so much his delight, that it is called by the very name of his glory; *The glory of the Lord shall follow thee, Isa. 58. 8, i. e.* the mercy of the Lord should follow them at the very heels. And when they call, it should answer them; and when they cry, he would, like a watchful guardian servant, cry out, *Here I am.* So that he never lets a great sinner, when changed into a penitent, wait long for mercy; though he sometimes lets them wait long for a sense of it. This mercy is never so delightful to him, as when it is most glorious; and it is most glorious, when it takes hold of the worst sinners. For such black spots which mercy wears upon its face, makes it appear more beautiful.

Christ does not care for staying where he has not opportunities to do great cures, suitable to the vastness of his power, *Mark 6. 5.* When he was in his own country, he could do no great work there, but only laid his hands upon a few sick people. He had not a suitable employment for that glorious power of working miracles. So when men come to Christ with lighter guilt, he has but an under opportunity given him, and with a kind of disadvantage, to manifest

the greatness of his charity. Though he has so much grace and mercy, yet he cannot shew more than the nature and exigence of the opportunity will bear; and so his pleasure doth not swell so high, as otherwise it would do. For little sins, and few sins, are not so fit an object for a grace that would ride in triumph. Free grace is God's darling, which he loves to advance; and it is never more advanced, than when it beautifies the most misshapen souls.

3. *Power.* The scripture makes conversion a most wonderful work, and resembles it to creation, and the resurrection of Christ from the dead, &c.

(1.) *Creation.* Conversion simply considered, is concluded by divines to be a greater work than creation: for God puts forth more power morally in conversion, than he did physically in creation. The world was created by a word; but many words, and many acts, concur to conversion. The heavens are called the works of God's fingers, *Psal.* 8. 3. But the gospel in the effects of it, is called the arm of the Lord, *Isa.* 53. 1; men put not their arm to a thing, but when the work requires more strength than the fingers possess. It is the *power of God* to salvation; and the faith it works is begun, and fulfilled with *power*, *2 Thess.* 1. 11. God created the world of nothing; nothing could not objectively contribute to his design, as matter does to a workman's intent; yet neither doth it oppose him, because it is nothing. As soon as God spake the word, this nothing brings forth sun, moon, stars, earth, trees, flowers, all the garnish of nature out of its barren womb. But sin is actively disobedient, disputes his commands, slights his power, fortifies itself against his entrance upon the heart, gives not up an inch of ground without a contest. There is not only a passive indisposition, but an active opposition. His creating power drew the world out of nothing, but his converting power frames the new creature out of something worse than nothing.

Naturally there is nothing but darkness and confusion in the soul; we have not the least spark of divine light, no more than the chaos had, when God, who commanded light to shine out of that darkness, *2 Cor.* 4. 6, shined in our hearts. To bring a principle of light into the heart, and to set it up in spite of all the opposition that the devil, and a man's own corruption makes, is greater than creation. As the power of the sun is more seen in scattering the thickest mists that triumph over the earth, and mask the face of the heavens, than in melting the small clouds compacted of a few vapours; so it must needs argue a greater strength to root out those great sins that were twisted and inlaid with our very nature, and become as dear to us as our right eye, and right hand, than a few sins, that have taken no deep root. Every man naturally is possessed with a hatred of God, and doth oppose every thing which would restore God to his right: and being since the fall, filled with a desire of independency, which is daily strengthened with new recruits, and loath to surrender himself to the power and direction of another: it is a more difficult thing to tame this unruly disposition in man's heart, I say more difficult than to annihilate him, and new create him again. As it is more easy oftentimes for an artificer to make a new piece of work, than to repair and patch up an old one that is out of frame.

2. *Resurrection.* Conversion simply is so called; *Quickened us when we were dead, Eph.* 2. 5. And the power that effects it, is the same power that raised Christ from the dead; which was a mighty power, that could remove the stone from the grave, when Christ lay with all the sins of the world upon him, *Eph.* 1. 19, 20; so the greater the stone is upon them, the greater is God's power to remove it. For if it be the power of God simply to regenerate nature, and put a new law into the heart, and to qualify the will with a new bias to comply with this law, and to make them that could not endure any thoughts of

grace, not to endure any thoughts of sin; it is a greater power sure to raise a man from that death, wherein he has lain thirty or forty years rotten and putrified in the grave: for if conversion in its own nature be creation and resurrection, this must needs be creation and resurrection with an emphasis.

The more malignant any distemper is, and the more fixed in the vital parts, and complicated with other diseases, and greater is the power in curing it; for a disease is more easily checked at the first invasion, than when it has infected the whole mass of blood, and become chronic; so it is more to pull up a sin, or many sins, that have spread their roots deep, and stood against the shock of many blustering winds of threatenings, than that which is but a twig, and newly planted.

3. *Traction or drawing.* Drawing implies a strength. If conversion be a traction, then more strength is required to draw one that is bound to a post by great cables, than one that is only tied by a few pack-threads; one that has millions of weights upon him, than one that hath but a few pounds.

4. It is the *only miracle* Christ hath left standing in the world, and declares him more to be Christ than any thing. When John sent to know what he was, *Luke 7. 20*, he returns no other account but a list of his miracles; and that which brings up the rear as the greatest, is, the poor, *εὐαγγελίζονται*, are evangelized. It is not to be taken actively, of the preaching of the gospel; but passively, they were wrought upon by the gospel, and became an evangelized people, transformed into the mould of it. For else it would bear no analogy to the other miracles. The deaf heard, and the dead were raised; they had not only exhortations to hear, but the effects were wrought upon them. So these words import not only the preaching of the gospel to them, but the powerful operation of the gospel in them. It is not so great a work to raise many thousands killed in a

battle, as to evangelize one dead soul. It is a miracle of power to transform a ravenous wolf into a gentle lamb, a furious lion into a meek dove, a nasty sink into a clear fountain, a stinking weed into a fragrant rose, a toad or viper into a man endued with rational faculties and moral endowments; and so to transform a filthy swine into a king and priest unto God. In conquests of this nature does divine power appear glorious. It is some strength to polish a rough stone taken out of the quarry, and hew it into the statue of a great prince; but more to make this statue a living man. Worse stones than these doth God make children, not only to Abraham, but to himself, even the Gentiles, who were accounted *stones by the Jews, and are called stones in scripture for the worshipping idols.

What power must that be, which can stop the tide of the sea, and make it suddenly recoil back? What vast power must that be, that can change a black cloud into a glorious sun? This, and more doth God do in conversion. He doth not only take smooth pieces of the softest matter, but the ruggedest timber full of knots, to plane and shew both his strength and art upon.

4. *Wisdom.* The work of grace being a new creation, is not only an act of God's power, but of his wisdom; as the natural creation was. As he did in contriving the platform of grace, and in bringing Christ upon the stage, so also in particular distributions of it, he acts according to counsel, and that infinite too, even the counsel of his own will, *Eph.* 1. 11. The apostle having discoursed before, ver. 9, of God's making known the mystery of his will in and through Christ: and ver. 11, of the dispensation of this grace, in bestowing an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, *who works all things according to the counsel of his own will*: he doth not say, God predestinated us according to the coun-

* *Grot. Matt.* 3. 9.

sel of his own will, but refers it to all he had said before, viz. of his making known the mystery of Christ, and their obtaining an inheritance. And ver. 8, speaking before of the pardon of sin in the blood of Christ, according to the riches of God's grace, wherein, saith he, *he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom*: as there was abundance of grace set apart, to be dealt out, so there was abundance of wisdom, even all God's wisdom, employed in the distribution of it. The restoring of God's image requires at least as much wisdom, as the first creating of it. And the application of redemption, and bestowing of pardoning and converting grace, is as much an act of God's prudence, as the contrivance of it was of his counsel.

Grace, or a gracious man in respect of his grace, is called God's *workmanship*, *Eph. 2. 10*, *ποίημα*, not *εργον*; work of his art, as well as strength; and operation of his mind as well as his hand. His poem, not barely a work of omnipotency, but an intellectual spark. A new creature is a curious piece of divine art, fashioned by God's wisdom, to set forth the praise of the framer; as a poem is by a man's reason and fancy, to publish the wit and parts of the composer. It is a great skill of an artificer, with a mixture of a few sands and ashes, by his breath to blow up such a clear and diaphanous body as glass, and frame several vessels of it for several uses. It is not barely his breath that does it, for other men have breath as well as he; but it is breath managed by art. And is it not a marvellous skill in God, to make a miry soul so pure and chrySTALLINE on a sudden; to endue an irrational creature with a divine nature, and by a powerful word to frame so beautiful a model as a new creature is?

The more intricate and knotty any business is, the more eminent is a man's ability in effecting it. The more desperate the wound is, the more honourable is the chirurgeon's ability in the cure. Christ's healing a soul that is come to the last gasp, and given over by

all for lost, shews more of art, than setting right an ordinary sinner. Our apostle takes notice of the wisdom of God in his own conversion here : for when he relates the history of it, he breaks out into an hallelujah, and sends up a volley of praises to God for the grace he hath obtained. And in that doxology, he puts an emphasis on the wisdom of God ; *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever*, ver. 17. Only wise God ; only, which he does not add to any other attribute he there gives him.

This wisdom appears, 1. In the *subjects* he chooseth ; we will go no further than the example in our text. Our apostle seems to be a man full of heat and zeal. And the church had already felt the smart of his activity ; inso much, that they were afraid to come at him after his change, or to admit him into their company, imagining that his fury was not changed, but disguised ; and he of an open persecutor, turned trepanner, *Acts* 9. 26. None can express better what a lion he was, than he doth himself. *Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities, Acts* 26. 10, 11. He seems also to have been a man of high and ambitious spirit. This persecuting probably was acted so vigorously by him, to ingratiate himself with the chief priests, and as a means to step into preferment ; for which he was endued with parts and learning, and would not want zeal and industry to attain it. He seems to be of a proud spirit, by the temptation which he had ; *lest I should be exalted above measure, 2 Cor.* 12. 7. He speaks it twice in that verse, intimating that his natural disposition led him to be lifted up with any excellency he had : and

usually God doth direct his battery to beat down that which is the sin of our constitution.

He was a man of a very honest mind, and was forward in following every point his conscience directed him to; for what he did against Christ, he did according to the dictates of his conscience, as then informed; *I verily thought with myself, Acts 26. 9*; i. e. in my conscience, *that I ought, not that I might*, but that it was his duty. His error commanded with the same power that truth does where it reigns. Now it discovers the wisdom of God to lay hold of this man, thus tempered, who had honesty to obey the dictates of a rightly informed conscience, as well as those of an erroneous one; zeal to execute them, and height of spirit to preserve his activity from being blunted by any opposition: and parts and prudence for the management of all these. I say, to turn these affections and excellencies to run in a heavenly channel, and to guide this natural passion and heat for the service and advancement of that interest which before he endeavoured to destroy, and for the propagation of that gospel which before he persecuted, is an effect of a wonderful wisdom; as it is a rider's skill to order the mettle of a headstrong horse for his own use to carry him on his journey.

2. This wisdom appears in the *time*. As man's wisdom consists as well in timing his actions, as contriving the models of them; so doth God's. He lays hold of the fittest opportunities to bring his wonderful providences upon the stage. He hath his set time to deliver his church from her enemies, *Psa. 102. 13*: And he hath his set time also to deliver every particular soul, that he intends to make a member of his church, from the devil. He waits the fittest season to manifest his grace; *Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, Isa. 30. 18*. Why? *For the Lord is a God of judgment*, i. e. a God of wisdom; therefore will time things to the best advan-

tage both of his glory, and the sinner's good. His timing of his grace was excellent in the conversion of Paul,

(1.) In respect of *himself*. There could not be a fitter time to glorify his grace, than when Paul was almost got to the length of his chain; almost to the sin against the Holy Ghost. For if he had had but a little more light, and done that out of malice which he did out of ignorance, he had been lost for ever. He obtained mercy, why? because he did it *ignorantly*, ver. 13. As I said before, he followed the dictates of his conscience; for if he had had knowledge suitable to his fury, it had been the unpardonable sin. Christ suffered him to run to the brink of hell, before he laid hold upon him.

(2.) In respect of *others*. He is converted at such a time, when he went as full of madness as a toad of poison, to spit it out against the poor christians at Damascus; armed with all the power and credential letters the high priest could give him, who without question promised himself much from his industry. And when he was almost at his journey's end, ready to execute his commission; *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, Acts 9. 3*; about half a mile from the city, as Gulielmus Tyrius thinks*; at this very time Christ grapples with him, and overcomes all his mad principles, secures Paul from hell, and his disciples from their fears of him. Behold the nature of this lion changed, just as he was going to fasten upon his prey. Christ might have converted Paul sooner, either when Paul had heard of some of his miracles; for perhaps Paul was resident at Jerusalem at the time of Christ's preaching in Judea; for he was brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, *Acts 22. 3*, who was one of the council, *Acts 5. 24*. He might have converted him when he heard Stephen make that elegant and convincing oration in his own defence, *Acts 7*. Or when he saw Stephen's con-

* Turia. in loc.

stancy, patience, and charity in his suffering; which might somewhat have startled a moral man, as Paul was, and made him look about him.

But Christ omits the doing of it at all these opportunities, and suffers him to kick against the pricks of miracles, admonitions, and arguments of Stephen and others; yet hath his eye upon him all along in a special manner, *Acts 7. 58.* He is there named, when none else are; *And the witnesses laid their clothes at a young man's feet, named Saul.* And Saul was consenting to his death, *Acts 8. 1*; was there none else that had a hand in it? The Spirit of God takes special notice of Saul here; he runs in God's mind, yet God would not stop his fury. *As for Saul he made havoc of the church, Acts 8. 3.* Did no body else shew as much zeal and cruelty as Saul? Sure he must have some instrument with him; yet we hear none named but Saul. *And Saul yet breathing, &c. Acts 9. 1,* yet, as much as to say, he shall not do so long. I shall have a fit time to meet with him presently.

And was it not a fit time, when the devil hoped to rout the christians by him? when the high-priests assured themselves success from this man's passionate zeal, when the church travailed with throws of fear of him. But Christ sent the devil sneaking away for the loss of such an active instrument, frustrates all the expectations of the high priests, and calms all the stormy fears of his disciples; for Christ sets him first a preaching at Damascus in the very synagogues which were to assist him in his cruel design; And straightway he *preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God, and increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ, Acts 9. 20, 22.*

Did not Christ show himself, to be a God of judgment here? He sat watching in heaven for this season, to turn Paul with the greatest advantage. His wisdom answers many ends at once, and killed so many birds with one stone. He struck dead at one

blow Paul's sin, his people's fears, the high priest's expectations, and the devil's hopes. He triumphs over his enemies, secures his friends, saves Paul's soul, and promotes his interest by him ; he disappoints the devil of his expectations, and hell of her longing.

3. This wisdom appears to keep up *the credit* of Christ's death. The great excellence of Christ's sacrifice, wherein it transcends the sacrifice under the law, is because it perfectly makes an atonement for all sins ; it first satisfies God, and then calms the conscience, which they could not do, *Heb. 10. 1, 2*, for there was a conscience of sin after their sacrifices. The tenor of the covenant of grace which God makes with his people, is upon the account of this sacrifice, *This is the covenant I will make with them. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more, Heb. 10. 16, 17. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin, ver. 18.* This covenant extends not only to little sins, for there is no limitation ; great sins are included ; therefore Christ satisfied for great sins or else if ever they be pardoned, there must be another sacrifice, either of himself, or some other, which the apostle, upon the account of this covenant, asserts there need not be ; because this sacrifice was complete, otherwise there would be a remembrance of sin ; as the covenant implied the completeness of Christ's satisfaction, so the continual fulfilling or application of the tenor of the covenant, implies the perpetual favour and force of this sacrifice.

And indeed, when God delivered him up, he intended it for the greatest sins ; *He was delivered for our offences, Rom. 4. 25, παρ' ἁμαρτίας*, which signifies not stumbling, but *falling*. Not a light, but a great transgression. Now if Christ's death be not satisfactory for great debts, Christ must be too weak to perform what God intended by him, and so infinite wisdom was frustrate of its intention, which cannot, nor ought not to be imagined. Now therefore God takes the greatest sinners to shew,

1. First the *value* of this sacrifice. If God should only entertain men of a lighter guilt, Christ's death would be suspected to be too low a ransom for monstrous enormities; and that his treasure was sufficient for the satisfaction of smaller debts, but a penury of merit to discharge talents; which had not been a design suitable to the grandeur of Christ, or the infiniteness of that mercy God proclaims in his word. But now the conversion of giant-like sinners does credit to the atonement which Christ made; and is a great renewed approbation of the infinite value of it, and its equivalency to God's demands; for it bears some analogy to the resurrection of Christ, which was God's general acquittance to Christ, to evidence the sufficiency of his payment. And the justification of every sinner is a branch of that acquittance given to Christ at his resurrection; *Raised again for our justification, Rom. 4. 25.* And a particular acquittance to Christ for that particular soul he had the charge of from his Father.

All that power that works in the first creation of grace; or the progress of regeneration, bears some proportion to the acquitting and approving power manifested in Christ's resurrection: *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe; according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, Eph. 1. 19, 20.* In ver. 17, 18, the apostle prays for the carrying on the work of grace and regeneration begun in them, that they might more clearly understand that power which wrought in Christ; viz. that approving power of what Christ has done, which he exerts daily in conversion, and in the effects of it. For by raising any soul from a death in sin, God doth evidence the particular value of Christ's blood for that soul, as he did in raising Christ, evidence the general fulness of that satisfaction. And this he will do even to the end of the world; *Raised us up together with Christ: kindness through Christ Jesus, Eph. 2. 6, 7.*

All his grace in all ages, even to the end of the world, shall run through this channel, to put credit and honour upon Christ. Now the greater the sin is that is pardoned, and the greater the sinner is that is converted, the more it shows the sufficiency of the price Christ paid.

2. The virtue of this sacrifice. He is a *Priest for ever*, Heb. 7. 17, and therefore the virtue as well as the value of his sacrifice remains for ever; he hath obtained an *eternal redemption*, Heb. 9. 12, i. e. a redemption of an eternal efficacy. As long as men receive any venom from the fiery serpent, they may be healed by the antitype of the brazen one, though it were so many years since he was lifted up. And those who are stung all over, as well as those who are bitten but in one part, may, by a believing looking upon him, draw virtue from him as diffusive as their sin.

Now the new conversions of men of extraordinary guilt, proclaims to the world, that the fountain of his blood is inexhaustible; that the virtue of it is not spent and drained, though so much hath been drawn out of it for these five thousand years and upwards, for the cleansing of sins past before his coming, and sins since his death. This evidences that his priesthood now is of as much efficacy as his sufferings on earth were valuable; and that his merit is as much in virtue above our iniquity, as his person is in excellency above our nothingness. He can wash the tawny American, as well as the moral heathen; and make the black Ethiopian as white as the most virtuous philosopher. God fastens upon the worst of men sometimes, to adorn the cross of Christ; and maketh them eminent testimonies of the power of Christ's death; *He made his grave with the wicked, Isa. 53. 9. He shall give the wicked, (not grave) and the rich in his death.* Heb. God shall make man, wallowing in sinful pleasures, tied to the blandishments and profits of the world, to come to Christ, and comply with

him, to be standing testimonies in all ages of the virtue of his sufferings.

4. For the *fruitfulness* of this grace in the converts themselves. The most rugged souls prove most eminent in grace upon their conversion, as the most orient diamonds in India, which are naturally more rough, are most bright and sparkling when cut and smoothed. Men usually sprout up in stature after shattering agues.

PART III.

THE FRUITS OF CONVERTING GRACE, &c.

Increase of thankfulness—Love—Obedience—Humility—Self-abhorrence—Faith and dependence—Fear and reverence—Despair groundless—Perpetuity of divine love—Certain supplies of grace—Strength, against corruption—Glorifying God for his grace.—Remembrance of former sin—Address to doubting christians—Infinity of God's mercy—Jesus Christ came to save from the greatest sins—His death a satisfaction for the greatest sins—He is able to save from the greatest sins—His nature leads him to show mercy to the chief of sinners—He was exalted for this very purpose—His commission from the Father the salvation of such sinners—Necessary cautions—Relative to the pardon of sin—Against living in sin—The guilt, folly, and danger of this.

A SENSE of the sovereignty of grace in conversion, will first increase *thankfulness*. Converts only are fit to shew forth the praises of Christ; *That you should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. 2. 9.* *ἀπαράς*, the virtues of Christ. The end, why

God sets men at liberty from prisons and dungeons, and from fear of death and condemnation for great sins, is, that they may be fitted, and gain a commodious standing, to publish to the world the virtues of him; i. e. the mercy, meekness, patience, bounty, truth, and other royal perfections of Christ.

Men at their first conversion receive the grace of God with astonishment; for it is *δαμασὸν φῶς*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9, most amazing at the first appearance of it; as the northern nations that want the sun for some months in the winter, are ready to deify it when it appears in their horizon: for the thickness of the foregoing darkness makes the lustre of the sun more admirable. But suppose a man had been all his life-time like a mole under ground, and had never seen so much as the light of a candle, and had a view of that weak light at a distance, how would he admire it, when he compares it with his former darkness? But if he should be brought further, to behold the moon with its train of stars, his amazement would increase with the light. But let this person behold the sun, be touched with its warm beams, and enjoy the pleasure of seeing those rarities which the sun discovers, he will bless himself, adore it, and embrace that person that led him to enjoy such a benefit. And the blackness of that darkness he sat in before, will endear the present splendor to him, swell up such a spring tide of astonishment, as that there shall be no more spirit in him. God lets men sit long in the shadow of death, and run to the utmost of sin, before he stops them, that their danger may enhance their deliverance.

We admire more when we are pulled out of danger, than when we are prevented from running into it. A malefactor will be more thankful for a pardon, when it comes just as he is going to be turned off. If there be degrees of harmony in heaven, without question the convert thief on the cross warbles out louder notes than others, because he had little time to do it on

earth; and his engagements are the greater, because Christ took him in his arms when he was hanging over hell.

When Paul writ this epistle to Timothy, he was about fifty-five years of age, and yet those twenty years run out since his conversion had not stifled his admiration, nor damped his thankfulness for converting grace. Take a prospect of it in this chapter, *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, ver. 12, 13.* I thank Christ Jesus our Lord. He seems to set his sin and God's mercy in opposition. I was injurious, but I obtained mercy. I was a blasphemer, but I obtained, &c. I—mercy. Who would imagine, but that of all persons he should have passed by me, while he had taken this or that polished pharisee, this or that doctor of morality? but that he should overlook them, and set his eye upon me, so injurious, such a blasphemer, such a persecutor! A great sinner, when he reflects upon his sin, wonders that a *but* was not made at him. You find that no apostle gives such epithets to the grace of God as our apostle does. None so seraphical in his admiring expressions. Riches of grace, exceeding riches of grace, abundant grace, riches of glory, unsearchable riches of grace. He never speaks of grace without an emphasis. Single grace, and single mercy would not serve his turn.

2. *Love and affection.* Mary Magdalen, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, was most early in her affection, to bestow her provision of spices upon the dead body of her Saviour. The fire of grace cannot be stifled, but will break out in glory to God. This is such a grace, that man in innocency could not have exercised in such a height; because now the sinner is not only in his own sight unworthy of pardon, but worthy of the greatest hatred and punishment. You scarce find yourselves possessed with

greater affection to any, than those who have been instruments to free you from your sinful fetters. How often do you bless them, could pull out your eyes for them, and think all ways too little to manifest the sense of your obligations to them! And does the instrument carry away all? surely God has the greatest sacrifice of affection, when the convert considers that his powerful grace was the principal agent to draw him out of this spiritual mire. As when a present is sent to you, you shew a courtesy to the servant, but the chief part of your kindness is devoted to the master that sent him. What flames of love, raptures of joy, transports of affection, boilings of courage for God in a young convert! The soul is most courageous for God at first conversion, because it is then most stored with comforts; and is so struck into amazement at the marvellous light which darts upon him, that he is ambitious to be a martyr for God presently; *After that you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions, Heb. 10. 32.* Grace is not only attended with afflictions, but bestows a courage upon a convert to endure them. The soul then thinks it is able to undergo any thing for God, who hath bestowed so much grace upon it.

A christian hath the greatest love to Christ at the first turning to him; for since the horror of all his sins, and the natural ugliness and deformity of that which he has served so long, comes with a full sense upon him; and since the admirable excellency of Christ shines upon him, which is a sight he was never acquainted with before; the greatness of the danger he was in, and the incomparable love which beams upon him from his believing a Saviour, fills his affection with full sails. Thus do men, who have been tossed in a dangerous tempest, afflicted with the darkness of the night, as well as their danger, rejoice and welcome the rising sun in the morning, which dispels their tumultuous fears, as well as those gloomy shadows.

God permits a man's sin to abound, that his love after pardon may abound too; *Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much, Luke 7. 47, π, therefore, it is the consequent, not the cause of remission.* And this interpretation agrees best with the following words, *to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.* It is more consonant to reason, that where there are greater mercies, there should be greater returns of affection. Remission of sins is the greatest evidence of God's love, and therefore should be the greatest incentive of ours. And indeed Christ never appears to a penitent with a more comely air in his countenance, than upon the removal of great judgments, or the pardon of great sins; *In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel, Isa. 4. 2.* In that day: in what day? After great judgments, ver. 1, and in the foregoing chapter, in purging away great filth, ver. 4. The branch Jesus appears most lovely, when he comes laden with the fruit of grace, with the sanctifying juice of his blood; as a ripe bunch of grapes looks pleasantly in a thirsty traveller's eye. This convert Paul was more affectionate to Christ than any of the other apostles; for when he could not look upon him, he is enamoured on his very name, and delights to express it no less than five hundred times, as, I remember, some have numbered it in his epistles; more proportionably than Peter, James, and John did in what they writ.

3. *Service and obedience.* Such will endeavour to redeem the time, because their former days have been so evil, and recover those advantages of service, which they lost by a course of sin. They will labour that the largeness of their sin may be answered by an extension of their zeal. Such will be almost as much ashamed to do but common service, as they are now ashamed of their scarlet sins. As men further they go backward, the greater leap they usually take for-

ward. Grace instructs a man in holiness out of gratitude. The grace of God *teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. 2. 12.* Grace teaches us. The greater the grace, the more pressing is the instruction : as it increases gratitude, it increases service.

That Peter, who had been so criminal in denying his Master, and adding perjury to his perfidiousness, was as active in service, as he had been in apostacy. He laid the first stone of the christian church among the Jews after Christ's ascension ; he preached the first sermon to them, and charged them home with his Master's murder, *Acts 2.* He was also the spokesman in all business, described in the first six chapters of the Acts. He laid also the first foundation of the Gentile church ; for God in a vision revealed to him the calling of the Gentiles, passing by all the other apostles, to whom it was not known but by Peter's relation,* *Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe, Acts 15. 7.* A good while ago, which good while ago refers to the time, *Mat. 16. 18,* wherein Christ said, *upon this rock will I build my church.* He was chosen by God to this purpose, i. e. separated from the rest of the apostles, and adorned with this prerogative. Great sins did not make Christ change his resolution.

Never an apostle that had been bred up under Christ's wing, that was so active an instrument as this Paul, who had been so bitter an enemy. He *laboured more abundantly than all, 1 Cor. 15. 10.* In matters of obedience he would not ask counsel of flesh and blood ; *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, Gal. 1. 16.* He was quick in his obedience. He had endeavoured to weaken Christ's kingdom ; he now endeavours to list men in his service. He had

* Camer. on Myro in Acts 15. 7.

breathed out threatenings, he now breathes out affections; he could even spend and be spent for the interest of his Saviour. And usually we find converted souls most active in the exercise of that grace which is most contrary to that which was their darling sin.

4. *Humility and self-emptiness.* Christ chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty, 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27, that nothing should be attributed to their worth and dignity, but to his grace and mercy. Were the gospel discovered only to the wise, they would look upon it rather as a discovery made by the optics of their own reason. And if God did bestow his grace only upon men of unspotted conversations, they would rather think it a debt God stood obliged to pay them, than a free act of grace. As God reveals knowledge to the simplest, *Mat. 2. 25*, so he does manifest grace to the sinfulest, and as Christ blessed his Father for that, so no doubt but he doth return the same thanks for this. Such great sinners receive all from God, and so have more reason to hang down their heads; others may sometimes cast many a loving look to their own righteousness, and, like Nebuchadnezzar, glory, This is the Babylon which I have built; and boast of their good acts, and freedom from the common pollutions of the world.

But such who were fallen over head and ears in the mire, and were dirty all over, have no cause to boast; for God did not find them, but made them worthy. They brought nothing but dirt and rags, that were not worthy the washing; only God would pick glory out of their worthlessness, to his own grace. Such are sensible, that God was not their debtor, but they his; and that there was nothing in them to oblige God to bestow the least mite of mercy on them.

Therefore we find not one of these mountainous

sinner in scripture ascribing their conversion to their own strength or merit. As no apostle was so God-magnifying, so none was so self-vilifying as Paul; though he was the greatest apostle, yet he accounts himself less than the least of all saints, *Eph. 3. 8.* Unto me who am less than the least of all saints. Surely he might have put himself equal to the least, it would have been great humility to do so; but he is more humble than so, even less than the least; less even than him who was only fit to be a door-keeper in the house of God. And he esteems himself not only unworthy of the office of an apostle, but of the very name; *Not worthy, 1 Cor. 15. 9,* not only to be, but to be called an apostle. And why? because of his former sin; because *I persecuted the church of God.* The remembrance of his great sin before his conversion, kept him humble. And, in ver. 10, when he had a little boasted of his abundant labour, he checks himself presently, *Yet not I, but the grace of God.* He attributes his very being as a christian, as well as his actions to the same cause, viz. the grace of God; by grace *I am what I am.* So *Gal. 1. 16,* how doth Paul attribute to grace; *pleased by his grace,* reveal; revelation, not acquisition.

5. Bewailing of sin and *self-abhorrance* for it. When men are first translated out of darkness into the kingdom of Christ, and begin to know Christ truly, the ways of their former ignorance are very bitter and uncouth things unto them. The very disproportion and unsuitableness of them to the sweetness of that grace, which now they taste from the hand of Jesus, is an offence to them, and hateful to their thoughts. Therefore the more sin a man hath run into before his return to God, the more he sees the vileness of his own nature, and consequently the more he abhors himself, *Then shall you remember your iniquities, and shall loathe yourselves, Ezek. 36. 31.* When? ver. 29, when God had accomplished the promise of saving them from all their uncleanness.

They shall remember with abhorreny what was their own sin, and shall enjoy what is purely God's. The time of pardoning great sins, is the time of great self-loathing; such prove the holiest persons, because they have had more experience of the evil of sin.

Such are ashamed of their sins, not only at the instant of their conversion, but afterwards, every time they remember them; *What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed, Rom. 6. 21.* Now, at that time, when Paul writ to them; the very shame of their sins stuck upon them, though they had been converted before. The more they grew in the experimental knowledge of God and his godness, the more a holy shame for sins committed in their natural condition was stirred in their consciences; and they could not but blush every time they considered how dirty they had been towards God. Now the greater the shame, the greater the hatred of the occasion of that shame, and the more exact the watchfulness against it. As a man that hath fallen into some slough by some stumble or oversight, when he travels that way again, he cannot but remember what a pickle he was in, and will be watchful lest he meet with the same mishap. Whose heart was more melted by mercy than Mary Magdalen's? All the pharisees that Christ converted never rained such showers of tears; how she used all her instruments of sin to be servants to her repentance! Her eyes, which had inflamed so many hearts, been snares to catch men, she makes the conduits to convey her penitential tears to her Saviour's feet. Her hair, which had engrossed so much time in the curiosity of dresses, she uses as a towel to wipe them. The ointment she had used for the tricking up herself, to gratify the senses of her lovers, she pours out to embalm her Lord. Her lusts should have no more of her choicest things, but her Saviour should have all. She would keep them not so much for her own use, as his.

6. *Faith and dependance.* (1.) At present in the

instant of the first act of faith. Great sins make us appear in the court of justification, *sub forma impii*, with a naked faith, when we have nothing to merit it, but much to deserve the contrary; *Believes on him that justifies the ungodly, Rom. 4. 5.* The more ungodly, the more elevated is that faith which lays hold on God. Thomas's unbelief was very black, for he had refused to give credit to all the testimonies of the disciples concerning Christ's resurrection; but when he was sensible of his crime, and so kindly dealt with by his Saviour, he puts forth a stronger act of faith than any of the rest; *My Lord, and my God, John 20. 28.* His faith was not satisfied with a single *my*: he gives him more honourable titles, and his heart grasps him more closely and affectionately than any of the rest.

The man that was born blind, and cured by Christ, owns him, acts some faith before the pharisees; *If this man were not of God, he could do nothing, John 9. 33.* And he said, *I believe*, ver. 39, and he worshipped him. But when Christ comes to talk with him particularly, ver. 36, 37, 38, he believes. When Christ comes to talk with a great sinner, one that hath had diseases naturally incurable, he exerts a stronger faith than others. It is then, *Lord, I believe*, and it is a faith accompanied with an adoration.

(2.) In following *occasions*. Pardoning such great sins, and converting such great sinners, is the best credential letter Christ brings with him from heaven; men naturally would scarce believe for his own sake, but for his work's sake they would; because they are more led by sense than faith. This Christ knew, when he bids his disciples believe him for the work's sake, that he was sent by God, and that they are unanimous in this work of grace, as well as in other works; *Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake, John 14. 11.* Therefore those that have been partakers of this converting grace, if they stagger, and

doubt afterwards, they give the greatest affront to Christ.

For their unbelief is not only against his person, but against his work too. That he has far more reason to say to such, than he did to his disciples, *How long shall I be with you, &c. Matt. 17. 17*; what should I stay to do such great works as these, and cannot be believed? Such great sins pardoned, and escaped, make men take faster hold of Christ afterward. As a man that hath lately got out of a deep lake, wherein there were many serpents, crocodiles, and venomous creatures, which he has escaped, and has no sanctuary to protect him from their fury, but by hanging upon a small bough; when he looks down upon them, and sees them gaping for him, and ready to devour him, if he were within their reach, he would summon up all his strength to hold fast that branch. In such a day will the *branch of the Lord* also be beautiful and glorious.

Certainly, when the soul went out to Christ in so desperate a condition, with the load of guilt and discouragement upon it, and resolved to venture upon him, come what would of it, and found success; as it was the boldest adventure, which the scripture frequently calls boldness, so it is the greatest encouragement to come to Christ upon any occasion whatsoever hereafter. This first act of faith is of so noble and generous a quality, that it is set as the copy of all following acts of faith; *Beginning of your confidence, Heb. 3. 14*; ἀπερω; the primary act of faith, which was the principal act of confidence. Though there is a greater strength in the habit of faith after conversion, yet the first exercise of it upon Christ is the boldest and most vigorous, because it was for the saving the life, when the soul saw no recovery any way but in Christ; and the most noble, when it was under the discouragements of such mountains of guilt.

It also gave Christ the greatest honour : for it was an act of greater confidence in him than any succeeding act could be. Now if thou didst put forth such a high and daring act of faith, when all thy sins hung about thee, and thou hadst neither a Hur or Aaron to hold up thy hands, with much more confidence mayest thou come now, since thou hast tried how successful thy first faith has been. So when temptations assault thee, and the devil with all his black legions besets thee round, thou art not in a worse condition than at the first, when all thy sins did not only besiege thee, but possess thee ; well may such a soul say, If I acted faith when the devil had all the strong holds in me, at the worst ; now it is but to start out, and exercise the power of that first faith.

(3.) In case of *corruptions* likewise, and *unmastered sins* : I have great corruptions, but the power which raised Christ, raised me, when I had greater stones upon me, wherewith I had even wearied God himself ; and now when I have fewer, though they are too great still, shall I despair of that power which wrought greater miracles for me, and threw away my grave-stones, when I was not able to stir myself ?

(4.) So in case of *desertion*. I will venture to go to God, let him frown and strike ; for I am sure I did once go to him when I was his absolute sworn enemy, and he had not a greater hater of him in the world than I was, and he did receive me ; I am not worse now than I was at that time ; for I love him, and would do all that I can to please him ; therefore I will press into his presence now, and try the success of my first faith. Such men's faith is usually a more generous faith, because they have less of the principle of reason to support it. It is like that of Abraham's, a believing *in hope against hope*, Rom. 4. 18. A faith against mighty and mountainous opposition of high and mighty sins, that might scare a man from such acts of faith, and establish a diffidence of

the promises of God in the soul; God receives no more glory from the faith of any, than from those of the greatest sinners through their repentance.

7. *Fear and reverence.* Such will never despise the riches of that goodness and patience which has been given out to him, *Rom. 2. 4*, because it has led him to repentance; and he will not provoke that goodness which is conducting him to the enjoyment of all the fruits of repentance, to throw him off. *There is forgiveness with thee*, saith *David*, *that thou mayest be feared*, or worshipped, *Psa. 130. 4*. If God should set a mark of death upon every iniquity, who could stand in his presence, or have any hope to be heard? but because he is a God of forgiveness, therefore he is revered; ; therefore the more forgiveness he doth expend upon any, the more he is revered. After a man's return to God, his fear of God is increased upon a more ingenuous account; for he fears God and *his goodness*, *Hos. 3. 5*, whereas before he feared God and his power, God and his justice. And the Jews of whom he there speaks, shall fear, or reverence that goodness the more; because the sin he has pardoned was so great, as the crucifying the Son of God, which according to their Father's wish lay upon the heads of all their posterity.

God's goodness once tasted, will make ingenuity afraid to offend him. Self interest also will make them afraid to provoke that mercy that formally relieved them, to cashier them out of his favour. When the man was in the deep dungeon, where the fetters of sin entered into his very soul, and bound up under the terrors of the law, when mercy stepped in, and delivered him, and poured oil into his wounds, he will be afraid to provoke that mercy to leave him in the same condition, in which it found him, and from whence it drew him. He will be loath to be numbered amongst the crew of transgressors, and bank of galley-slaves, from whence he has been redeemed. He that hath tasted the

bitterness of sin, will fear to commit it; and he that hath felt the sweetness of mercy, will fear to offend it.

I might add, for *others' sakes*, to engage them to come to Christ. Every conversion of a great sinner is a new copy of God's love; it is a repeated proclamation of the transcendency of his grace. *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, Eph. 2. 5, 6.* God hath quickened those rank sinners, that were as black as darkness itself, and hath raised them to a condition of light; why? Not only for themselves, but that *in the ages to come he might shew forth, υπερβάλλοντα, transcendent riches of his grace, ver. 7.* It was a picture God drew of his own heart, and exposed to the view of the world, that they might know by the gracious entertainment, and high advancement of those sinners, how liberal he is, and would always be in the distributions of his grace, that penitent sinners of as great stains might be encouraged in all ages to rely upon him. This was his design in Paul's conversion in this chapter; *Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting, ver. 16.* A pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him. He sets up this apostle as a white flag to invite rebels to treat with him; and return to their loyalty. As every great judgment upon a grand sinner is as the hanging a man in chains, to deter others from the like practice; so every conversion is not only an act of God's mercy to the convert, but an invitation to the spectators.

This is the argument David useth to persuade God to pour into him the joy of his salvation; *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, &c. Psal. 51. 12, 13.* I will make all Jerusalem ring of it; and sinners, seeing the multitude and long train of thy tender mercies, shall fly into thy arms to be partakers of the same grace. For every great conversion is as a

sea-mark, to guide others into a safe harbour. And indeed this he tells God, when he had received pardon, that this would be the issue of God's pardon to David, *Psal. 52. 5, 6*, which is thought to be penned upon the same occasion, as *Psal. 51*, when, ver. 5, he had been forgiven, he tells God what the effect upon others would be, *For this shall every one that is godly, &c.* ver. 6, judging it the fittest time to come when God is dealing out his mercy. Such effects we find when Christ was upon the earth; when Christ called Matthew, *Mark 2. 14*, the next news we hear, ver. 15, is, that many publicans and sinners sat down with him, and followed him. Many of the same tribe were encouraged by this kindness to one of their fellows, to attend upon him.

As when a physician comes into an house where many are sick, and cures one that is desperate, it is an encouragement to the rest to rely upon his skill.

When Christ gives an experiment of his art on any sinner near thee, it is a call from heaven as well to excite thy emulation to come to him, as thy astonishment at it. As the conversion of the Gentiles was to provoke the Jews to jealousy; *Salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for so provoke, &c. Rom. 11. 11.* Indeed such conversions may more rationally move men, than any miracle can objectively move the sense. To see such a remarkable change wrought in the soul of a devil, in a diabolical nature. If men believe not in Christ after the sight of such standing miracles, it is an aggravation of their impenitence; as much as any miracle Christ wrought upon the earth, was of the Jews' obstipacy, and does put as black a dye upon it. *Ye, when you had seen it, repented not afterward, that you might believe him, Mat. 21. 32.* Not any great sinner that thou hast seen take heaven by violence, but is writ down by God as a yet upon all thy unbelief. And how many hundred yets may Christ bring against thee, upon the

account of others converted round about thee. The yet set upon Paul may refer to this; *Acts 9. 1*, because in the foregoing chapter Luke had related the successful progress of the gospel in Samaria and Jerusalem, which was an evidence of the power of this new doctrine; yet Paul proceeded in his persecuting fury, against such clear testimonies.

Had you been in the times of Christ, and seen those miracles he wrought among the Jews, you would all think you should never have been so stupid as they were, but would presently have believed in him upon a sight of those wonders. Let me tell you, the success of Christ's grace upon the souls of men, whereof you have seen many evidences, is a greater miracle, by Christ's own confession, than usually he wrought: for he tells the apostles, they should work *greater works*, *John 14. 12*, which he means of their success in converting work. And so thy impenitency has as great aggravations as the Jewish perversity. Let every such conversion of a great sinner be a ground of hope to thee, and a spur in thy side.

Further, such conversions evidence that God's commands are practicable, that his yoke is not burdensome. Men naturally think God a hard master, that his commands are impossible to be performed; but when they see men that had lain soaking in sin many years, to have a fresh and fair verdure by grace, to run with delight in the ways of God's commands: when they see men that had the greatest prejudices against the ways of God, thoroughly turned, they may think with themselves, why may not I observe those commands? Is it more impossible for me, than such a one? It is natural to men not to believe, unless they see miracles; *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe*, *John 4. 48*. Therefore all the standing miracles God hath left in the world, are the extraordinary conversions of men, and the worst of men, that men may thereby be convinced of the power of

the gospel, and the strength of his grace, by seeing the admirable effects of it upon others; for many times conversion begins in admiration.

The use of this subject is,

First, Instruction. The doctrine manifests the power of the gospel. Nothing shows more the heavenly authority of the christian religion, and the divine efficacy of the word, than the sudden conversions of notorious sinners. That a man should enter into a church a tiger, and return a lamb. It is this little stone which is instrumental to lay lusts more giant-like than Goliath, grovelling in the dust. That Paul, mad with rage against the christians, should after an arrest in his journey embrace a religion he hated. A pharisee changed into a preacher. A persecutor commence a martyr. That one of eminent parts, in favour with the Sanhedrim, should fly from a preferment expected, and patronize a doctrine contemned in the world, and attended with poverty, misery, cruel scourgings, and death. Whenever you see such effects, take them as credentials from heaven, to maintain the credit of the word, and to assert the authority of that conclusion Paul lays down, that it is *the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1. 16.* God gains a reputation to the gospel, and the power of christianity, that can in a moment change persons from beasts to men, from serpents to saints.

2. *Groundlessness of despair.* Despair not of others, when thou dost reflect upon thy own crimes, and considerest that God never dealt with a baser heart in the world than thine was. Was not Paul as unlike to prove a convert, as any relation of thine that wallows in his blood? Who would have thought that Onesimus should run from his master, and be caught in Christ's arms? Neither despair of thyself. Shall any soul in anguish, and covered with penitential blushes, think itself cast out of the riches of God's affectionate grace? Shall any man so much blaspheme the merciful heart of Jesus Christ, as to fly to a knife,

a halter, or a deep well for succour? Though thou wert in hell, David tells thee God is with thee, even there in his essential presence; yea, though thou wert hell itself; for where the devil dwells, that is hell: yet if the soul throbs, sighs, groans under it, his infinite grace will break down the door, and come in upon thee. And we know, that neither she that had seven devils, nor he that had a legion, were strong enough to keep out Christ.

Secondly. Comfort of this subject. If God has made thee of a great sinner the object of his mercy, thou mayest be assured of, 1. *Continuance of his love.* He pardoned thee when thou wert an enemy, will he leave thee, now thou art his friend? He loved thee when thou hadst razed out in a great measure his image and picture, which he had set in thy soul; will he hate thee now, since he has restored that image, and drawn it with fresh colours? He justified thee when thou wert ungodly, and will he cast thee off, since he hath been at such pains about thee, and written in thee a counterpart of his own divine nature in the work of grace? Were his compassions first moved when thou hadst no grace? and will they not sound louder since thou hast grace? Would the father embrace his son, when his garments smelled of draff and swine? and will he cast him off, after he hath put upon him a royal robe? Will Pharaoh's daughter pity Moses, when he was in the ark? and will she scorn him when he is dressed?

2. *Supplies of his grace.* Thou hadst a rich present of his grace sent thee, when thou couldest not pray for it; and will he not much more give thee whatsoever is needful, when thou callest upon him? He was found of thee when thou didst not seek him; and will he hide himself from thee when thou art enquiring after him? A wise builder does not begin a work, when he is not able to finish it. God considered, before he began with thee, what charge thou wouldest stand him in, both

of merit in Christ, and grace in thee; so that the grace he hath given thee, is not only a mercy to thee, but an obligation on himself, since his credit is engaged to complete it. Thou hast more unanswerable arguments to plead before him, than thou hadst, viz. his Son, his truth, his promise, his grace, his name, wherein thou hast not the least interest. To what purpose has God called thee, and marked thee, if he doth not intend to supply thee with as much grace as shall bring thee to glory? To what purpose should a creditor forgive part of a debt, and lay the debtor in prison for the other part? Has God given thee Christ? and will he detain any thing else? Supplies of wants, grants of any thing thou desirest, are but as a few grains of pepper that the grocer puts in as an overplus to many pounds.

3. Strength against *corruptions*. Can mole-hills stand against him who has levelled mountains? Can a few clouds withstand the melting force of the sun, which has dissolved those black mists that overspread the face of the heavens? No more can the remainders of thy corruption bear head against his power, which has thrown down the great hills of the sins of thy natural condition, and has dissolved the thick fogs of thy unregeneracy. Thou canst neither doubt his strength nor his love; *amor gaudet in maximis*; he has done the greatest, and will he withdraw his hand from doing the least? When Moses slew the Egyptian, it is said, that he *supposed his brethren would have understood, that God intended by his hand to deliver them, Acts 7. 25.* Moses was a type of Christ: has Christ overthrown a whole army of Egyptians, that did not only pursue thee, but keep thee in slavery? Has he overturned them all in the Red sea? and wilt thou not take notice thereby, that he intends to be thy deliverer from the scattered troops of them?

Thirdly. Exhortation. 1. To those that God hath dealt so with.

1. *Glorify* God for his grace. Admiration is all the glory you can give to God for his grace, seeing you can add nothing to his essential glory. Christ will come at the last day to be admired; I pray send your admirations beforehand to attend him at his coming. Who made thee thus to differ from another? Was it not God? Let him then have the glory. If he made thee to differ from others in the enjoyment of his mercy, do thou also differ from others in the sounding of his praise. If thou hast an angel's state, it is fit thou shouldst have an angel's note. If David, when he considered the glorious heavens God had made for man, cried out so affectionately, *What is man that thou art mindful of him!* *Psal.* 8. 4; surely when thou considerest that work of grace which God hath wrought in thee, thou mayest with astonishment cry out, *Oh, what is man that thou art mindful of him!* What is such a vile creature, that thou shouldst take him into thy bosom? For there is not a grace in thee, but is more glorious than the sun with all its regiments of stars; and is more like to God than the great fountain of light with all its amazing splendor. It is something of that heaven, which is more glorious than all the rest of the heavens, and is above the reach of the natural eye. Oh what is man thou art thus mindful of him, to make him who is a hell by sin, to become heaven by grace! Pardon of but one act of sin, makes us for ever debtors to God; because one sin renders us obnoxious to eternal torments, and every sin includes a hatred of God. What then is it to remit such vast sums, if to pardon one be a miracle! To pardon many committed against a suffering Christ, that hath invited us, and repeats his invitations, after they have been rejected, is a miracle of the greatest magnitude, something above a miracle!

How should you think Jacob's expression in temporal mercies, a few sheep, too mean! *I am less than the least of all thy mercies,* *Gen.* 32. 10. Oh I am

less, less, less than the least of all this mercy. A great sinner, when converted, should sing a note somewhat above David's, *What shall I render? Psal.* 116. 12; and should say, I can render nothing, nothing; but I will render praise, blessing, amazement, astonishment; that is all I can render, and I cannot render enough of that. Had you chosen God first, it had been some ingenuity in God to answer that affection; but God chose you first, and that when there was nothing lovely in you, when he saw you the most deformed creatures in the world. There was no likeness between God and thee. *Similis simile amat*, is a rule in nature; but in this case, *Deus optimus diligit hominem pessimum*.

It is that which does amaze the disciples; they could not tell the reason why Christ should manifest himself to them, *John* 14. 22. Perhaps thou art only snatched out of a family; the wrath of God may be fallen upon the rest, and thou only escaped. Has he not lopped down many cedars in morality, and chosen thee, a thorn, a shrub, to deck heaven with? Are not many damned, that were not guilty of thy sins?

How wonderful is it that such a black firebrand should be made a statue fit for glory? He might have written thy name as easily in his black book, as in his white. Is it not admirable mercy for a God provoked, to take pains with stiff-necked sinners, and to beat down mountains of high imaginations, to rear up a temple to himself? If mercy had knocked once or twice, and no more, thou hadst dropped into hell; but mercy would not leave knocking. Perhaps thy sins were so great, that if thou hadst gone but a little farther, thou hadst been irrecoverable; but God put a stop to the proud waves, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further*.

2. Often call to mind thy *former sin*. It hath been the custom of the saints of God formerly. When Matthew reckons up the twelve apostles, *Mat.* 10. 3, whereof he was one, he remembers his former state,

Matthew the publican ; but none of the other Evangelists call him so in that enumeration.

1. It makes us more *humbel*. Thoughts of pride cannot lodge in us, when the remembrance of our rags, bolts, and fetters, is frequently renewed. What was there in thy former life, but misery, to move God to shew mercy to thee ? Though Paul had a greater manifestation than any we read of, nay than Christ himself had, (for we do not read that Christ was wrapped up into the third heavens) yet how frequently does he remember his sin of persecuting, to keep humiliation in exercise, and stop the growth of pride.

2. It will make us *thankful*. Sense of misery heightens our obligation to mercy. Men at sea are most thankful for deliverance, when they consider the danger of the foregoing storm. A long night makes a clear morning more welcome.

3. It will make thee more *active in the exercise of that grace* which is contrary to thy former sin. Christ asked Peter thrice whether he loved him, *John 21*, to put him tacitly in mind of his late sin, and to have a threefold exercise of his love, proportionable to his threefold denial.

4. It will be a *preservative against falling into the same sin again*. Perhaps Christ might press that threefold demand of Peter's love, to renew his repentance for his apostacy, as the best antidote against the falling into the same sin ; and therefore Peter was grieved when he asked him the third time ; not so much, it may be, for the suspicion his Master had of his fidelity, as for the just cause of jealousy his fall had given him. And at this third question calling to mind his denial, he renewed his grief for his late unworthy carriage. Look back then upon thy former sin, but let it be with anger and shame, to strengthen thy detestation, to strangle thy former delight in it, and to magnify the mercy of God, who has delivered thee from it. When the Corinthians

were proud of their spiritual gifts, the apostle beats down their swelling plumes, by giving them a review of their accursed state, *Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols,* 1 Cor. 12. 2. *Ye know that ye were Gentiles, &c.* When a convert frequently considers what he was once in his unregenerate state, he would not for all the honours, profits, and pleasures of the world, return to that state again; so great a delight he takes in the work of the new creature.

The second branch of exhortation is to those that are in a *doubting* condition. The main objection such make, is the greatness of sin. Oh! there was never such a great sinner in the world as I am! If you rake all hell over, you will not find such another. Sure God will never pardon me; my sins are too great to be forgiven. Such language as this does sometimes drop from men, which they are partly urged to by the devil, to disparage that royal prince Jesus, that came to destroy his works, and to keep up an enmity between God and man, in making the creature have jealous thoughts of the Creator. And partly from a man's own conscience, which acting by those legal principles written in the heart by nature, which are directive, and upon non-observance condemning, but discover nothing of pardoning grace. This was the first act of natural conscience in Adam, after he had sinned; he had the least thoughts of forgiveness, for he studied nothing, but how he might fly from the presence of God. Such speeches as these discredit thy Creator, if they be persisted in, argues thee to be one of Cain's posterity, who indeed told God to his very face, that *his sin was greater than could be forgiven,* Gen. 4. 13. I will a little argue with such.

But, 1, Art thou indeed the greatest sinner? I can *hardly believe it.* Didst thou ever sin after the rate that Paul did? or wert thou ever possessed with such a fury? Sure there have been some as great sinners as thou art, be as bad as bad can be. If thou were to

look over the names of all those now in heaven, and ask them all what sins they were guilty of, before God showed mercy to them; I cannot think but thou wouldest find many that would mate thee, yea, and exceed thee too; and thou canst not charge thyself with any black circumstances, but thou wouldest meet with some or other that would cry out presently, Oh, I was in the like condition, and rather worse! What dost thou think of Christ's murderers, who resisted the eloquence of his sermons, and the power of his miracles? And when his death had darkened the sun, shook the earth, clave the rocks, rent the veil of the temple in twain; not one heart among that murderous crew had any saving relents that we read of. And yet were not some of these converted by Peter's Sermon, and the pardon of them left upon record by the Spirit of God?

Have not some of God's greatest favourites been the greatest sinners? Did not Adam draw upon him the guilt of all his posterity, and may in some sense be charged with the sins of all those that came out of his loins, even all mankind? Yet to this very person was the first promise of the gospel made, and that before he pronounced any sentence against him for his sin, *Gen. 3. 15.*

2. Suppose thou art the greatest, is thy *staying from Christ* the way to make all thy sins less? Art thou so rich, as to pay this great debt out of thy own revenue? Or hast thou any hopes of another surety? Did any man or angel tell thee, they could satisfy for thee? Can complaints of a great load, without endeavouring its removal, ease that back that bears it?

3. Are thy sins the greatest? Is not the staying from Christ a *making them greater*? Does not God command thee to come to Christ? and is not thy delay a greater act of disobedience, than the complaint of thy sinfulness can be of humility? Hast thou not load enough already, but wilt thou add unbelief, which is as black as all thy other sins put together?

Is not a refusal of his mercy provocative? Thou art mad if thou thinkest thy sin can decrease by trampling upon Christ's heart, and spurning at his compassion. Thou hast sinned against justice, against wisdom, against common providence: is not this enough, but wilt thou rob him of an opportunity to show the riches of his grace, by refusing the blood of his Son, which his wisdom contrived, and his love offers? Who is it persuades thee thus to keep off from Christ? Does God? Show me, where is his hand for it? Show me thy authority in God's warrant. But since thou canst not, I am sure it is thy own corrupt heart and the devil in league together. And mayst thou not say of him far better than Ahab did of Micaiah, Thou didst *never prophecy good* to me; no, he never did, nor ever will. What, wilt thou more black thyself, by following the devil's counsel, than obeying God's command? If thy sin be great, let it multiply thy tears, but by no means stop thy progress to Christ.

4. Were thy sins less than they are, thou mightest not so easily believe in Christ, as *now thou mayest*. If thou wilt not believe while thy sins are great, and thy heart naughty, I dare assure thee, if thy heart were not naught, and thy sins little, thou wouldst not believe; for thou wouldest be apt to believe in thy own heart, and trust in thy own righteousness, rather than believe in Christ. Great sins and a bad heart felt and bewailed, is rather an advantage; as hunger is an incentive to a man to seek for meat. If men had clean hearts, it is like they would dispose of them otherwise, and rather think Christ should come to them. Men's poverty should rather make them more importunate, than more modest. To say, I will not come to Christ, because I have great sins, is as if one should say, I will never have any thing to do with happiness if offered, because I have great misery: I will go to no chirurgeon, because my wound is so great: I will eat no bread, be-

cause I am so exceeding hungry, and like to starve. This is ill logic; and so it is with thee, to argue, because I am unclean, therefore I will not go to the fountain to be washed; or to think to be sanctified before believing. Now since thou hast, as thou confessest, no righteousness to trust in, methinks thou shouldest be the more easily persuaded to cast thyself upon Christ, since there is no other way but that.

If therefore thou art afraid of drowning under these mighty floods which roll upon thee, methinks thou shouldest do as men ready to perish in the waters, catch hold of that which is next them, though it be the dearest friend they have; and there is none nearer to thee than Christ, nor any such a friend; catch hold therefore of him.

5. The greatness of thy sin is *a ground for a plea*. Turn thy sins into arguments, as David doth; *for it is great, Psal. 25. 11.* Some translate it, *Though it be great*; and the Hebrew word גַּד will bear both, The psalmist useth two arguments, God's name, and the greatness of his sin. And both are as good arguments as they were then. Thou mayest go to God with this language in thy mouth; Lord, my impurity is great, there is more need therefore of thy washing me; my wound is deep, the greater is the necessity of some plaister for a cure. What charitable man in the world would not hasten a medicine, rather than refuse to grant it? What earthly physician would object, the disease is great, therefore there is no necessity of a cure; therefore there is no room left for my skill? And shall God be less charitable than man? Dogs may lay claim to crumbs that fall from the master's table. Thou mayest use also the argument of God's name. Sinners may plead for grace upon the account of God's glory; viz. the glory God will have by it. His wisdom is eminent in serving his own ends by his greatest enemy. His power in conquering sin, his grace in pardoning. Show him

his own name, *Exod.* 34, and see if he will deny any letter of it.

If thy disease were not so great, Christ's glory would not be so illustrious. Pardon of such sins enhanceth the mercy and skill of thy Saviour. The multitude of devils which were in Mary Magdalen, are recorded to show the power of that Saviour that expelled them; and wrought so remarkable a change. Are thy sins the greatest? God that loves to advance his free grace in the highest manner, will be glad of the opportunity to have so great a sinner follow the chariot of it, and to manifest thereby its uncontrollable power. Use David's argument, *Psal.* 37. 12, when ver. 8, he prayed, that God would deliver him from his transgressions, ver. 12, he useth this argument, that he was a stranger. I know no reason but it may be thine, for if thy sins be great, thou art more alienated from God than the ordinary rank of men: Lord, thou dost command us to show kindness to strangers, to love our enemies; and wilt thou not use the same mercy to a stranger, that thou commandest others to use, and show the same love to so great an enemy as I am? The greater my enmity, the more glorious will be thy love.

Plead therefore, 1. *The infiniteness of God's mercy.* It is strange if thy debts should be so great, that the exchequer of the King of kings cannot discharge them. Why should the apostle say, God was *rich in mercy*, *Eph.* 4, and call it great love, if it were spent only upon little sins, and if any debts could exhaust it: for surely an infinite God cannot be finitely rich. If God be rich in mercy, he is surely infinitely rich: thou canst not think that any that have got to heaven before thee, have drained his treasures, for then it had been finite, not infinite. They were not unsearchable riches, if the sins of all the world could find the bottom of them.

God looks upon his grace as the greatest part of his estate. He calls it his riches, which title he gives

not any other attribute: now riches are not to lay by and rust, but to be laid out and traded with; and the more they are traded with, the more wealth they bring in. God hath not delight to keep these riches by him, and to hoard them up for no use; for *omne bonum est sui diffusivum*; therefore the more goodness any thing hath, the more diffusive it is of itself. God loves to distribute his wealth upon his own terms, and to venture out riches of grace, that he may have returns of riches of glory; so that if you come to God, you have all his estate at your service. Till thou canst be as sinful as God is merciful, as evil as God is good, do not think thy iniquities can check an almighty goodness. Mercy bears the greatest sway in God's name, *Exod. 34. 6, 7*. There is but one letter of his power, two of his justice, and nine or ten expressions of his mercy. His power attends his mercy as well as his justice; so that on mercy's side against justice there is five to one, which is great odds.

Plead then with God, Lord, it is said in thy word, *Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give thee, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it, Prov. 3. 28*. Should a man refuse to give to his neighbour, when he has it by him; and shall the merciful God deny me that mercy which I beg of him upon my knees, when he has it all in store by him? Must I forgive my brother, if he offends seventy-seven times, a double perfect number; and must I be more charitable to man, than infinite mercy will be to me? Shall thy justice only speak, and thy mercy be silent, and plead nothing on my behalf? Hast thou not said, that thou art he that *blots out transgressions for thy own sake? Isa. 43. 25*. That thou dost *blot out iniquities like a thick cloud? Isa. 44. 22*. Is there any cloud so thick as to master the melting power of the sun; and shall ever a cloud of sin be so thick as to master the power of thy mercy? Has not thy mercy as

much strength and eloquence to plead for me, as thy justice has to declaim against me? Is thy justice better armed with reason, than thy kindness with compassions? Have thy compassions no eloquence? Oh! who can resist their pleasing rhetoric?

2. Christ's, and God's intent in his coming, was to *discharge great sins*. He was called Jesus, a Saviour, because he was to save his people from their sins. And do you think some of his people's sins were not as great as any men's sins in the world? To save only from little iniquities, had not been a work suitable to the glorious name of Jesus. Neither can we conceive how Christ should enter into such strict bonds to his Father, to be a surety only for some smaller debts? If this had not been his intent, he would have put some limitation in that prayer he taught his disciples, and not have commanded them to pray, *forgive us our trespasses*; but, forgive us our little sins, or sins of such a size. He never asked what sins, and how many sins men were guilty of, when they came to him. But upon faith, saith he, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*. Plead therefore with Christ, and say, thou didst come to do thy Father's will, which was, that none should be cast off that come unto thee; and thou hast said the same; it is not sufficient for thee to say it merely, and not to do it. Wilt thou draw me with the cords of a man, (for I could not thus come to thee, unless thou didst draw me,) and shall I be beaten back with a frown?

3. Christ's death was a *satisfaction for the greatest sins*, both *ex parte facientis* Christ, and *ex parte acceptantis* God; for God could not accept any satisfaction but what was infinite. *One sacrifice for sins for ever*, &c. *Heb.* 10. 12, not one sin, but sins. Not little sins, but sins without exception. Yea, and it is all sin, 1 *John.* 1. 7; and all includes great as well as

little. * Satan once came to a sick man, and shows him a great catalogue of his sins, concluding from thence his eternal damnation: the sick man strengthening himself by the word of God, bid the devil write over the catalogue in great letters those words, 1 *John* 1. 7, whereupon the devil presently leaves him. Can thy sins be greater than Christ's merit? or thine offences, than his sacrifice? It is strange if the malignity of thy sin should be as infinite as the virtue of his death. He hath satisfied for all the saints that ever came to heaven; and put thy sins in the balance with theirs, and surely they cannot weigh so much. He was a *propitiation for the sins of the whole world*; and are thy sins as great as the sins of the whole world? If part of his merits be enough to save ten thousand damned souls in hell, if they had applied it; is it not enough to satisfy God for thy sins, which are far less? Was not Christ charged with as great sins as thine can be, when he was upon the cross? Or are thy single sins bigger than all those the prophet means, when he saith, *And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. 53. 6.*

Well then, plead thy Saviour's death, since it was for his honour to satisfy for sins of so deep a dye: it is said in thy word, it is a joy to a righteous man, to perform judgment; and shall it not be much more a joy to the righteous God? Behold, here I offer thee the atonement thy Son and my Saviour has made; and if it be not enough, I am content to perish: but if it be, I desire thee to do me justice with that joy that a righteous man would do it with, and discharge my transgressions. And if thou dost object, that I have flung away this satisfaction, and would not have it: I answer, my Saviour's satisfaction was for such sins as those, otherwise none would be saved: for was there any but refused the proffer of it at first, made

* Gouhart *Tableau de la mort*, Tableau 9. p. 131.

demurs before they entertained it? Let thy objections be what they will, Christ shall be my advocate to answer for me.

4. Christ is *able* to take away great sins. Did he ever let any one that came to him with a great infirmity go back without a cure, and dishonour himself so much, as that it should be said, it was a distemper too great for the power of Jesus to remedy? And why should there be any sin that he cannot pardon? It is as easy for him to heal the one as the other: for he did with as much ease and delight say, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, as say, *Take up thy bed, and walk*. Hast thou seven devils? Suppose a legion, i. e. six thousand six hundred and sixty-six; he did dispossess a body of as many: Can he not as easily dispossess a soul? If thou hadst ten thousand legions, I dare say Christ would not lose an opportunity of such a conquest; for it would please him more to do great works than little, and to show how far his power can reach.

Were it not for such objects, we could not know whether he could *save to the utmost*, or no, *Heb. 7. 25*. What has he this ability for? to lie idle? No surely, to be exercised about the most difficult tasks. Suppose the scroll of thy sins were as long as to reach from earth to the highest heavens, would this reach to the utmost of Christ's ability? If thou hadst sinned as far as any man in the world can sin, yet still thou art not got without the verge of Christ's saving power. That word utmost I dare set against all thy objections. If you had the sins of all the damned in hell upon you, you could not put either his free grace or vast power to a nonplus. His blood is of that virtue, that were it poured out upon a devil, it would make him presently commence a glorious angel. What is either a great or a light disease to omnipotence, when with the same word he can cure the greatest as well as the least distempers?

But may the soul say, I do not question his power, but his *will*. Therefore, 5. Christ's *nature* leads him to show mercy to the greatest sinners. Some question whether Christ will pardon them, for they look upon him as a hard master, that will not easily forgive. But Christ gives another character of himself, *Mat. 11. 28, 29*, when he exhorts men to come to him; he tells them they must not judge him to be of a rugged and implacable nature, but as meek as they are sinful. Meekness is seen in pardoning of injuries, not keeping them in memory, to beget and cherish revenge. Now the greater the provocation, the more transcendent is that meekness to pass it by. Did he ever upbraid any with their offences, and hit them in the teeth with their former extravagancies? *Luke 7. 44*. Christ makes a narrative of Mary's acts of kindness to him, but not a syllable of her foul transgressions. Are thy sins so great? surely Christ, who delights in his compassions, will not lose such an opportunity of evidencing both his power and his pity upon such a subject: for if there cannot be so great a sinner as thou art, he is never like to have such a season for it, if he miss of thee.

6. Christ was *exalted* by God upon this very account. *Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, Heb. 7. 25*. How comes Christ to be so able to save to the uttermost? It is because *he ever lives to make intercession for them*: for whom? For those *that come to God by him*. What has Christ his life in heaven for, but to intercede? And would his Father's love to him, and the greatness of his interest in God be discovered, by granting some small requests, the pardon of a few and little sins? Christ is consecrated priest by the oath of God, *Heb. 7. 28*; would God put himself to his oath for a light business, a thing of little moment? What is the end of this oath? Compare it with, *For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abun-*

dantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, Heb. 6. 16, 17, 18. And all is that you might have strong consolation. What strong comfort could there be, if only little debts were remitted? What is the end of an oath? Ver. 16, to take away strife? Men do not strive with God, or doubt of his mercy to forgive little sins, for they think that will be done of course. But the great contest men have with God, is about his willingness to remit great debts, scarlet sins: Upon this account the strife is between God and doubting sinners; therefore to bring this contest to a period, God hath put himself to his oath, and sworn that Christ should be a priest for ever, to take away all strife between him and believing sinners. For whom is this strong consolation founded upon God's oath? For those that *fly for refuge*, ver. 18. Now the cities of refuge were not appointed for ordinary crimes, but for blood, to secure the malefactor from the avenger.

Shall I add further, God is best pleased with Christ when he makes intercession for the greatest transgressors. Suppose thou hadst been one of Christ's murderers, and hadst given thy vote against him; perhaps thou wouldest have thought this a more crimson sin than any thou art guilty of. You know Christ prayed for their pardon while he was upon the cross. And God gives this as one reason why he would exalt him; *He shall divide him*, &c. *Isa.* 53. 12; why? because he poured out his soul to death. What should he bear sin for, if God had no mind to pardon it? And because he was *numbered among the transgressors*, which the evangelist understands of his being crucified with thieves, *Mark* 15. 28. And therefore his making intercession for transgressors, must be understood of his prayer upon the cross. And if God did exalt him for this, would God be pleased with him, or would Christ answer the end of his exaltation, if he did cease to make intercession for sinners of the like stamp? Go and tell God, that he sent Christ to

bless you, *Acts* 3. 26, in converting you ; and desire Christ to do his office.

7. Christ is *intrusted* by God to give out his grace to great sinners. Christ is God's Lord almoner, for the dispensing redemption, and the riches of his grace. To whom? Not to the righteous, they have no need of it ; but to sinners, and those that have the greatest necessity. He would be an ill steward, who when intrusted by his lord to bestow his alms upon the poor, should overlook the most miserable, indigent, and necessitous persons, when they crave it of him, and relieve those that had not so great and crying wants. Christ is a priest for intents of the same nature as the legal typical priests were. They were to have compassion, *Heb.* 5. 2. *μετὸν ἁμαρτίαν*, to measure out their compassion, to order the sacrifice according to the nature of the sin of the person that presented it. So is Christ by virtue of his office to measure out his grace according to the greatness of a man's necessity ; as manna was to be gathered according to every one's wants.

Well then, to conclude this exhortation. Embolden thyself to draw near to Christ. It is the apostle's use he makes of all his foregoing doctrine, *Heb.* 10. 19, &c. God requires not a heart without sin, but a heart without guile. Who needs more boldness than great sinners? And the apostle sets no limits to it. Let us, who have been as great sinners as any, resolve to do as they in Jeremiah did, *Jer.* 3. 22. They had both a command, and a promise. Return, there is the command. I will heal, &c. there is the promise. Presently they reply, *We will come to thee*, &c. They seem to snatch the promise out of God's mouth. How will these quick and ready converts rise up in judgment against thy slowness and dulness? Shall they do this upon one promise; and when thou hast all the promises in the book of God repeated to thee, shall God hear no other answer but this, *We will not return, or we dare not come, we dare not believe thee?*

Did God give but one promise to Adam, and did he embrace it, and live upon it all his life; (for we read of no more he had than that of the seed of the woman breaking the serpent's head) and wilt thou not return, when thou hast so many promises filling every page in the scripture?

Hast thou not a world of precedents? Did not God take up all his saints from the dunghill with all their rags, and clothe them? Were any of them born princes, and sons of heaven? Alas, every man at first sued for a Saviour in the right of a sinner; and all pleaded in the court of heaven *in forma pauperis*. Were they not debtors, and could they do that which might make God cross out one of those sums they owed him? Oh think not then thou canst dam up that torrent of love that has flowed so freely to the world for so many ages. Though thy disease be grievous, yet it is not irrecoverable, provided thou goest to the physician. He can with a breath burn up thy corruption, as soon as dissolve the creation. Christ can turn the muddiest water into such wine that can please the heart both of God and man. As you have been vessels of sin, if you will be vessels of repentance, God will make you brimful of mercy. Plead not therefore thy own unworthiness. Man's unworthiness never yet hindered the flowing of God's kindness. It is too weak a bank to stop the current of God's favour. The greater thy unworthiness, the greater advantage has free grace to manifest its uncontrollable excellency. That man dishonours God, that sets his sin above God's goodness, or his unworthiness above God's condescension. You cannot do God a greater pleasure, than to come to him to be made clean. When he reckons up thy sin, it is not with an upbraiding, but a compassionate sigh, *Jer. 13. 27.* He longs for the time of thy returning; and minds thee of thy sin, that thou mayest the sooner seek a remedy; and wonders thou wilt continue in such a filthy condition so long.

Fourthly. The caution which this subject suggests.

1. Think not thy sins are pardoned, because they are not so *so great as those God has pardoned in others.* This is *ad suam consolationem aliena numerare vitia**. Consider, God cast off Saul for less sins than David committed. Evil angels were cast off for one sin. A few small sands may sink a ship as well as a great rock. Thy sins may be pardoned though as great as others, but then you must have equal qualifications with them. They had great sins, so hast thou; but have you as great a hatred and loathing of sin as they had?

2. Let not this doctrine *encourage any person to go on in sin.* If thou dost now suck such poison out of this doctrine, and boast of that name God proclaims, *Exod. 34. 6, 7,* take the cooler along with thee, and remember it is one part of his name, *by no means to clear the guilty.* He never intended those mercies for sinners, as sinners, but as penitent. Penitents, as such, are not guilty, because repentance is a moral revocation of a sin, and always supposes faith in Christ. There is *forgiveness with God, Psal. 130. 4,* but it is *that he may be feared,* not despised. God never intended mercy as a sanctuary to protect sin.

(1.) It is *disingenuous* to do so. Great love requires great duties, not great sins. Freeness of grace should make us increase holiness in a more cheerful manner. What high ingratitude is it, to be inclined to sin, because God is inclined to pardon; to have a frozen heart to him, because he hath a melting heart to thee? What, to rebel against him, because he has a compassionate heart; and to be wicked, because God is good? To turn grace itself into wantonness. Is this to fear his goodness? No, it is to trample on it, to make that which should excite thee to holiness, a bawd to thy lust, and God himself a pander to the devil. If thou dost thus slight the design of this mercy, which thou canst never prize at too high a rate, it is certain thou never hadst the least taste of it. If

* Hierony in vol. 1. p. 114. e.

thou hadst, thou couldst not sin so freely: for when grace enters, it makes the soul dead to sin, *Rom. 6. 1, 2.* The apostle answers such a consequence with a *God forbid.*

(2.) It is *foolish* so to do. Would any man be so simple, as to set his house on fire, because he has a great river running by his door, from whence he may have water to quench it; or wound himself, because there is an excellent plaister which has cured several?

(3.) It is *dangerous* to do so. If thou lovest the present time, thou art in danger to lose eternity, There are many in hell never sinned at such a presumptuous rate. He is merciful to the penitent, but he will not be unfaithful to his threatenings. If thou art willing to receive grace, thou mayst have it, but upon God's conditions. He will not pin it upon thy sleeve whether thou wilt or no. This is to make that which is the savour of life, to become the savour of death unto thee. See what an answer Paul gives to such an imagination, *Let us do evil, that good may come, whose damnation is just. Rom. 3. 8.* He takes a handful of hell-fire and flings it in their faces. Let but the 29th of *Deut. 18, 19,* stare them in the face, and promise thyself peace in this course if thou canst. *Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood. And it cometh to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart.* As his goodness is great, which thou dost despise; so the wrath will be the hotter, thou dost treasure up. Though great sins are occasions of great grace, yet sin doth not necessitate grace. Who can tell, whether ever God would have shown mercy to Paul, had he done that against knowledge, which he did ignorantly? Repentance must first be; see the order, *Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, Acts*

3. 19. First, repentance and conversion, then justification. This grace is only given to penitent sinners. You know not whether you shall repent, but you may know, that if you do not repent, you shall be damned. As there is infinite grace to pardon you, if you repent; so there is infinite justice to punish you, if you do not repent. The gospel binds us to our good behaviour as much as the law.

FINIS.











